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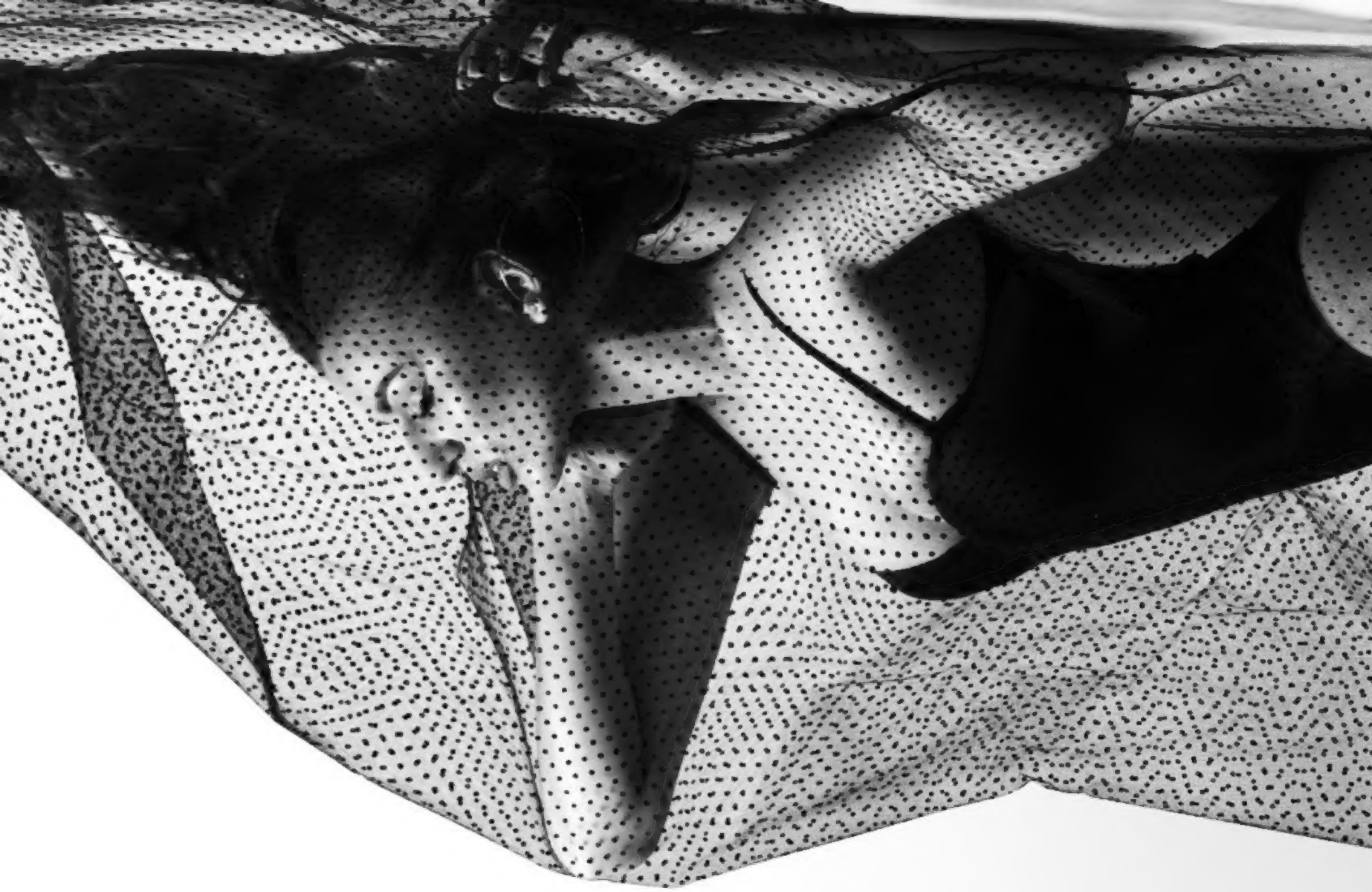

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Celebrating 60 Years of the *Playboy Advisor*

From grope suits to grapefruits, our sex-positive advice column has been satisfying the curious on matters of the heart, body and soul for six decades

BY **THE PLAYBOY EDITORS**

PHOTO BY **POMPEO POSAR**

It can be hard to imagine a world in which answers weren't as easy to come by as simply shouting a question at your phone or across the room. ("Siri, what is shrimping?" "Alexa, can you define spectrophilia?") But 60 years ago information wasn't so readily available—especially when the issue involved sex. So when PLAYBOY debuted its Advisor column in 1960, it's no surprise that it quickly became a popular resource for those curious about sex and how to live the good life.

Each month the Advisor provided a forum where anonymous men and women could ask questions of a dependable authority without fear of judgment. Whether addressing the definition of a flying Philadelphia fuck (fellatio, with partner assists from a rocking chair and chin-up bar) or explaining the nature of the goat's eyelid (an ancient sex toy), the Advisor was a trusted voice of reason, assuring readers their urges, interests and bodies were, for the most part, totally normal.

"Our mission in life is to make sex better for everyone," declared the Advisor in 2001, a mantra that holds true today. Yet far from promoting a conquering or cavalier attitude toward sex, the Advisor regularly counseled patience and understanding between partners and would-be paramours. A 2000 study of Playboy Advisor's first four decades, written by a sociologist and two psychologists, concluded that its content "tended toward tolerance, promoted equality between the sexes and broke down, rather than reaffirmed, stereotypes."

Below, we look back at some of our favorite reader letters, one from each of Advisor's first six decades of publication. Here's to 60 more years of solid advice!

1960s: Looks Like He Made It

In December 1965 the Advisor published a letter from a young man at a crossroads. "B.M." said he was a rising star in the corporate world who was thinking about abandoning his success to pursue his musical dreams. The Advisor encouraged him to risk it. The young man who took the advice? Barry Manilow.

Q: Music has always been a vital part of my life. Due to financial difficulties, however, I had to stop attending music school and accept a job at a leading radio-and-television network. Through enormous good fortune, I have been promoted very rapidly and at the age of 22 I hold a junior executive position with a very generous salary. The only drawback is that this position has absolutely nothing to do with music. During these past few years, between working and attending college, I have managed to musically direct and conduct three full-scale musicals at various theater workshops in New York. I now have an offer to take this last musical out of town for a period of six to eight months at a good salary with the promise of a permanent position as a musical director. My musical wild oats are screaming to be sown, but it means giving up my secure job. Leaves of absence are rare, so it looks like it's either one or the other. Any suggestions? —B. M., Brooklyn, New York

A: *Follow your real interest and take the musical out of town. At your age, your financial responsibilities are few. If you remain in the secure job, you may regret for the rest of your life that you didn't sow your notes. You can always go back to radio and television: Your ability was recognized once; chances are it would be recognized again—if not with your former employer, then elsewhere.*

1970s: Dress for Success

Kinksters and the sexually curious found a listening ear in the Advisor. This letter from August 1975 concerns a reader's quest for specialized gear for herself. Sure, it was the "me" decade, but the Advisor was a constant source of encouragement for sexual exploration and the normalization of self-pleasure.

Q: I've been reading about a Scandinavian sex device called a grope suit. Supposedly, it will keep a woman in an almost constant state of orgasm. Would you know anything about it—for instance, where I could purchase the device? —Miss F. D., Melbourne, Florida

A: *Grope suits came out of the closet after Alex Comfort devoted a paragraph to them in Joy of Sex. In case your little brother stole your copy, Comfort describes the attire as a m"very tight rubber G string with a thick phallic plug which fits in the vagina and a roughened knob over the clitoris. The bra has small toothed recesses in the cups which grip the nipples and is covered all over inside with soft rubber points. Once it is on, every movement touches a sensitive area." Yee-hah. In spite of publicity, it's almost impossible to find a grope suit in this country. The Sears catalog doesn't mention one.... Invent your own erotic wardrobe: bikinis made out of waist chains, leather thongs, feathered boas, inflated balloons—the fittings are a gas. In cool weather, an inside-out fur coat is a reliable turn-on. If you believe that less is more, try going out on a date without wearing underwear. You'll find that clothes can make a woman.*

1980s: Hygiene Hijinks

Along with copious queries about positions, performance and penis size, questions about oral sex have been a popular topic in Advisor across the decades. This variation on "don't eat before swimming" appeared in November 1988.

Q: I've heard that it is dangerous to brush your teeth or floss before performing oral sex. Why? —P. U., Dallas, Texas

A: *If God had wanted you to floss before having oral sex, he wouldn't have provided pubic hair. Actually, a recent issue of Sexuality Today warned against brushing before having a bedtime snack—it is thought that you might lacerate your gums, thus opening the way to sexually transmitted infection. Of course, if you never brush your teeth, you won't be able to attract a partner in the first place. This advice assumes that your partner has an infection. If he or she doesn't, then continue with your normal program for oral hygiene.*

1990s: Orange You Glad to See Me

The 2017 comedy Girls Trip immortalized grapefruiting—a blow-job-abetting move that real-life sex educator Auntie Angel had been teaching for at least a decade prior. In August 1994 the Advisor addressed a question from a reader whose adventurous but misinformed girlfriend turned him into a fan of sexy citrus play.

She halved the third orange and rubbed it all over her body, which I licked clean.

Q: I thought I had experienced everything in the erotic world until the night my girlfriend came into my bedroom stark naked, holding three large oranges and a knife. She carved a hole in the end of the first one and allowed the juice to drip all over my genitals She cut the second one into four wedges, squeezed them and licked the juice off my scrotum. She then forced the head of my erect penis into the hole of the first orange, gently squeezing and turning the orange until I came. She halved the third orange and rubbed it all over her body, which I licked clean. Then she asked me to squirt the juice directly into her vagina. Have you ever heard of having sex with citrus fruit? My girlfriend says citric acid fights infection. Is that true?
F. B., Hesperia, Michigan

A: *Sounds as if you had a delicious time. Your girlfriend is an inspired and imaginative woman, but her claim that citric acid fights infection is false. Citric acid will sting when applied to a cut, but it is not an antiseptic. However, you needn't worry about scurvy in the near future*

We don't doubt your penis grew, but the only moon that has any influence on it is your wife's ass.

2000s: Moon Units

The Advisor is well known for respectful guidance on serious questions. But regarding this September 2001 letter, you know what they say about asking a ridiculous question…

Q: My wife told me that my erection appears larger on nights with a full moon. I didn't believe her, so she measured me every night for two months. And, sure enough, on nights just before, during and after a full moon, I was half an inch longer. Have you heard of this before? Does it have anything to do with the moon's gravitational pull? R. J., New York, New York

A: *That's a new one. Does your pubic hair get thicker too? We don't doubt your penis grew, but the only moon that has any influence on it is your wife's ass. You both expected it to be larger in the moonlight, which influenced how aroused you became when she prepared you and took measurements. That could easily account for that half inch. Under controlled conditions, there would be no difference. The moon does not move the blood or water in your body as it does the tides, and its gravitational pull is a function of its distance from the Earth, not its phase. Nevertheless, your wife should continue to stroke and examine your erection every day.*

2010s: Unicorns Beware

For more than 50 years, the Advisor was a man. That changed in 2016, when the appropriately named Rachel Rabbit White pulled on the Advisor mantle and began addressing topics including toxic friendships, manic pixie fuck-boys, chemsex and this memorable installment on thirsty threesomes:

Q: We're a heterosexual couple in search of a "unicorn" (an attractive bisexual woman) to join us for a few date nights a week. We've had some one-off threesomes but can't find a partner to join us more long-term. Apps, dating sites, friends, acquaintances—nothing has worked. What are we doing wrong?

A: *Unicorn hunters have a bad reputation. Perhaps it's the polyamorous community's endless lingo: ambigusweetie, new relationship energy, friends-first swinging and other terms that reek of corporate buzzwords. One has to wonder if all polyamorous people are middle managers. Of the threesome-seeking couples on Tinder, inevitably she is bi but without much experience, and of course he loves to watch. Tina, a former unicorn, has been on her share of "throuple" dates. "These couples are called unicorn hunters because they're often predatory," she says. Couples end up treating her like a fantasy rather than a partner; these pairs are simply looking for someone to fill a preimagined role….*

To answer your question: You may not be doing anything wrong. Dating itself consists of endless trial and error, as well as numerous bar tabs that never pay off. In ancient Greece the unicorn was believed to be a real beast. In medieval times the lack of proof of the animal's existence helped move it into the realm of myth. And as you're discovering, the fantasy of a third person, one who enters and exits a relationship with ghostly ease, is just as unattainable.

Photography by
Jerome Hamilton | @jeromeghamilton

“My favorite word in any language is love”

Describe yourself in three words? I would describe myself in three words as mysterious, sweet and determined.

Were you excited to shoot for Playboy? Was I excited to shoot for Playboy? I was ecstatic! It was an amazing experience that I will remember forever.

What was it like starting out as a model? Starting out as a model was invigorating. I met so many outgoing, interesting, beautiful people. I learned a lot in my first shoot, and I continue to learn today.

What would you consider to be your biggest challenge as a model so far? I would say my biggest challenge as a model is when I'm shooting outdoors and if the weather isn't great to remember to ignore the uncomfortable heat and enjoy the task at hand and have fun while I do so!

Describe your perfect day off when you are not modeling? My perfect day off when I'm not modeling is researching trends, fashion and what's new. I enjoy having a chill zen day incorporating yoga and some meditation.

Do you feel more like a city person or a country person? I would say I am definitely a mixture of both city and country. I am from New Orleans; I grew up horseback riding on my parent's ranch and also escaping to the French quarter to enjoy the party scene and shop.

If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be? If I could live anywhere in the world I would live in Australia. In Australia, there is wildlife and nature I don't get to experience in the states.

Do you have a secret talent? My secret talent is that I can do a split.

A guilty pleasure? My guilty pleasure is being impulsive about vacations and trying new exciting things. I love to go with the flow and have new experiences.

Which song is absolutely certain to make you cry whenever you hear it? A song that would absolutely make me cry whenever I hear it is Cosmic Love by Florence + The Machine. She is so talented her voice along with the beautiful instruments used in her music hits a soft spot for me.

What is your favorite word in any language and what does it mean? My favorite word in any language is love because for me you can use it to thank someone by saying thank you love and love is just a beautiful word and it's what life is all about. Falling in love with people as friends or lovers, falling in love with sights and sounds. Love is an intense feeling of deep affection or a great interest and pleasure in something.

Any last words you would like to share with the readers? My last words I would like to share with the readers are to always try to keep a positive mind and outlook on life. Practice positivity in your thoughts and watch it surround your life. We cannot change certain situations but we can control how we choose to react. We're in control of our own happiness babe.

Playboy Interview

Francis Ford Coppola

A candid conversation with the Midas-touch director of "The Godfather"

INTERVIEW BY **WILLIAM MURRAY** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **CARL IRI**

Every year or so, the American movie industry comes up with a talented new young director whose current flick is hailed as the greatest-ever piece of goods; he usually finds himself an overnight celebrity, the darling of TV talk shows and magazine profiles. Few deserve such treatment and even fewer manage to survive it. The latest of Hollywood's directorial darlings is a portly, bearded, fast-talking 36-year-old dynamo named Francis Ford Coppola (pronounced Cope-uh-lah), who made headlines this year by being nominated for five Academy Awards—and winning three of them. In the history of the awards, only the venerable Walt Disney received more nominations (six) in a single year. Coppola was also named best motion-picture director of the year by the Directors Guild of America.

Unlike most of the other boy geniuses, however, Coppola might actually be every bit as talented as the reviewers say he is. His present eminence rests largely on having made The Godfather Part II an even bigger artistic success than the original Godfather, which, in addition to grossing a staggering R4,950.00 million, has been acclaimed by most serious movie critics here and abroad as the greatest gangster picture ever made. For the first time in Hollywood history, a sequel to a tremendously successful motion picture has sur-

passed the original in critical estimation and is likely to do the same at the box office.

Just three years ago, Coppola was broke and so little in demand that he was reportedly only fourth or fifth on Paramount's list of possible candidates to direct what the studio envisaged all along as no more than a big-budget thriller to be carved out of Mario Puzo's sprawling best seller. Since The Godfather, Coppola has become the one person in the movie industry more in demand than Clint Eastwood. "If he took all the offers now coming his way in any one week," a studio executive recently said, "he'd have to work uninterruptedly for the next 50 years and might get to be rich enough to buy up Fort Knox."

The wonder is not that Coppola is so young to be in such a position but that it look Hollywood so long to find out about him. Francis remembers his childhood as an agitated series of crises, with much shouting, passion and tears. His father, Carmine, was a virtuoso flutist who played with several leading orchestras, including Arturo Toscanini's celebrated NBC Symphony. Unable to achieve recognition as a composer, he moved the family back and forth across the country in pursuit of his career, which was finally capped with an Oscar for the score of Godfather II. Francis's older brother, August, a writer, was handsome, brilliant and popular with girls; his sister, Talia, an actress (she played Connie, Michael Corleone's sister in both Godfathers), was the baby of the family. Francis retreated for a while into a fantasy world in which, for hours on end, he played with puppets, watched TV and read comic books.

He aspired to playwrighting but quickly changed his mind when he saw his first Eisenstein film, Ten Days That Shook the World, at the age of 17. "On Monday I was in the theater," Coppola has said, "and on Tuesday I wanted to be a filmmaker."

At UCLA's film school, Coppola won the Samuel Goldwyn writing award and at 22 he landed a job as a staff writer with Seven Arts, a major production company, where he directed a low-budget horror picture for producer Roger Corman. Coppola's master's-thesis film, You're a Big Boy Now, a knockabout farce with a rock score, brought him to the attention of Warner Bros., which signed him to direct a musical, Finian's Rainbow. It flopped. Mostly on his own, Coppola put together The Rain People, a film he wrote and directed about a pregnant woman who leaves her husband, despite the fact that she loves him, because she doesn't want to be married anymore. The movie antedated women's lib and is now considered to have been ahead of its period, a polite way of saying that it didn't make much money. But by that time, Coppola had also co-authored the screenplay of Patton, for which he won an Oscar. He was barely 28 and the odds were he'd make it big, if he just stuck around long enough.

By 1969, however, Coppola had had enough of Hollywood's chaotic financing methods, antiquated production techniques and rigidly entrenched craft unions. He talked Warner's into letting him set up his own production company, American Zoetrope, and moved to San Francisco, where he proposed to turn out high-quality, low-budget features. The company's first project, THX 1138, a futuristic script directed by his friend George Lucas that has since become a cult classic, all but sank it. Warner's canceled its contract, leaving Coppola stranded under a mountain of debts, from which he quickly extricated himself with The Godfather, followed not only by Godfather II but by its rival for best-picture honors in the 1974 Oscars competition, The Conversation.

Today, Coppola's only worry is deciding what to do next. He has enough money to indulge himself and he has a number of projects that have been sitting on his desk and/or maturing in his head for years. In addition to Lucas, whom he prodded into writing and directing the enormously successful American Graffiti which he produced after the script had been rejected by 11 studios—Coppola has gathered around him in San Francisco a small army of young, supremely talented individualists. They swarm in and out of the Coppola Company headquarters, an old eight-story San Francisco office building that Coppola is restoring. Coppola listens to everyone and overlooks nothing.

Some people feel this may be his undoing as an artist. Coppola willingly delegates authority and listens to advice, but he clearly feels capable of undertaking just about anything interesting that comes his way. He has also set up his own distribution company, has acquired a small legitimate theater, where he plans to produce and direct his own plays as well as those of others, is wheeling and dealing in real estate and publishes a biweekly magazine called City that aspires to do for the San Francisco region something of what New York does for its area. He enjoys a warm home life with his artist wife, Eleanor, and their three small children, as well as an active social one with a wide circle of friends and cronies whom he calls "the family." To find out more about this artist-mogul, PLAYBOY assigned contributor William Murray to track him down on his home grounds and interview him. Murray reports:

"Getting to see Francis Ford Coppola these days is about as difficult as setting up a tête-á-tête with the Godfather himself. It took weeks and dozens of long-distance phone calls, filtered through the usual guard screen of secretaries and superefficient business managers, before a meeting was finally arranged.

"I finally caught up with Coppola at his house, a light-blue, turn-of-the-century, 28-room mansion with a magnificent view of the Golden Gate Bridge. The huge rooms are stocked with gadgets, including an old jukebox, a player grand piano, hi-fi equipment and a fully equipped projection room. It was exactly the sort of palazzo I'd have envisioned for a self-exiled Hollywood tycoon, but I hadn't been in the place more than 20 minutes before I realized that, far from being a self-advertisement for power and success, everything in the house reflected the highly personal, even eccentric tastes of Francis or Eleanor Coppola.

"The first thing Coppola did was to make me a cappuccino on his own espresso machine, imported from Turin. We sat and sipped coffee. Everything was moving at such a leisurely pace that I couldn't imagine at first how I'd ever be able to get a real conversation under way with him.

"I needn't have worried. The minute I switched on my tape recorder, Coppola came to life. This was work. First, he corrected the position of the machine, then he fiddled with the volume and tone controls until he had them set to his satisfaction. Finally, he allowed me to question him. All you have to do with Coppola is get him going. After that, the problem is slowing him down, much less stopping him; I got the feeling he could have been a tremendous politician or an eloquent preacher. We talked for several hours that first day, then continued the next two days at his office.

"Our final session was held at his home. Coppola, wearing an Arab caftan that failed to conceal his bulk, ushered me into one of the Bay Area's largest backyards, where a Moorish-style pool is heated to body temperature. He leaped into the water and for the next five minutes he moaned very loudly. What if the neighbors complain? he was asked. 'It's my pool,' he answered, 'and I'll moan if I like.' Sipping a cup of espresso while standing in the water, he added: 'Y'know, I like this. It's my idea of real decadence.'

"Back in the living room, Coppola, his robe billowing about him, pirouetted, gavotted and jigged without a trace of self-consciousness to a record of carnival music that he'd brought back from Rio, where he'd gone to unwind for a couple of weeks. Then, I think, I saw the key to Coppola: He throws himself completely into everything he does, whether it's work or play. The man is a block of pure energy, with the powers of concentration of a leopard stalking prey. If anyone can pull off what he proposes to do to the film business, I'm convinced he can and I came away hoping he'd succeed."

COPPOLA: This is my last interview.

PLAYBOY: Why?

COPPOLA: I decided recently that enough is enough. Basically, there's only one story I can tell and I've told it. I think it's time I kind

of go on my way out of respect for the public.

PLAYBOY: All right, let's start with your recent Oscar haul for Godfather II. How did it feel to walk away with so many awards?

COPPOLA: Two years ago, I went to the Academy Awards ceremonies feeling blasé, not caring. I thought Godfather I would win most of the awards, but how important was the Oscar, anyway? Then it became clear that Cabaret was running away with the awards, and I suddenly started wanting to win desperately. When I didn't, I got very depressed. I figured I'd never make another film that would win an Oscar; I was going to go off and make small, personal films, the kind that rarely win awards. I had wanted to leave a winner.

This year, I thought Chinatown would clean up. I had two pictures nominated—Godfather II and The Conversation—and I figured that would split my vote. I was intrigued with the idea of losing twice after coming so close, which might be a record in itself. So when it all happened, I was so elated I didn't know what to do. I never expected Best Picture. I felt Godfather II was too demanding, too complex. But when it won, I felt the members were telling me they appreciated the fact that we'd tried to make a film with integrity.

PLAYBOY: What did you think when Bert Schneider, the producer of the antiwar documentary Hearts and Minds, read a telegram from a Viet Cong representative?

COPPOLA: Many people voted for Hearts and Minds as best documentary, not because it was a great film—it wasn't, particularly—but because of what the film said. And so when Schneider accepted the award, it was certainly appropriate for him to comment on what the film was saying. It wasn't as if they were giving him an award as best tap dancer only to have him turn around and give a political speech. The academy was sanctioning that documentary, was rewarding it for the message it conveyed. So his statement was really a response to that.

PLAYBOY: The incident caused quite an uproar. How did you personally feel about it?

COPPOLA: Imagine, in 1975, getting a telegram from a so-called enemy extending friendship to the American people. I mean, after what we did to the Vietnamese people, you'd think they wouldn't forgive us for 300 years! Getting this positive, human, optimistic message was such a beautiful idea to me—it was overwhelming. If the telegram had said, "You Yankee dogs have been killing us for 30 years and now we've got you, so screw you!" I wouldn't have read it. But it didn't say that.

As for the uproar caused by Frank Sinatra's reading the disclaimer expressing his and Bob Hope's reactions, well, men at that point in their lives can't understand what a message like that really means. They're not interested in the truth; they still think all Communists are bad, less than human. When people are against something, they don't even listen.

PLAYBOY: Your career as a director has been made by the two Godfather movies, and most of the critics seem to have recognized what you were trying to do with them, but none has had a kind word for the novel nor for its author, Mario Puzo. The New Yorker's Pauline Kael, in fact, calls the book trash. Could you have made two fine movies out of trash?

COPPOLA: When I was first offered the project, I started to read the book and I got only about 50 pages into it. I thought it was a popular, sensational novel, pretty cheap stuff. I got to the part about the singer supposedly modeled on Frank Sinatra and the girl Sonny Corleone liked so much because her vagina was enormous—remember that stuff in the book? It never showed up in the movie. Anyway, I said, "My God, what is this? The Carpetbaggers?" So I stopped reading it and said, "Forget it."

Four or five months later, I was again offered the opportunity to work on it and by that time, I was in dire financial straits with my own company in San Francisco, so I read further. Then I got into what the book is really about—the story of the family, this father and his sons, and questions of power and succession—and I thought it was a terrific story, if you could cut out all the other stuff. I decided it could be not only a successful movie but also a good movie. I wanted to concentrate on the central theme, and that's what I tried to do.

So the fact is, it wasn't a piece of trash. Like me, Mario went after the money at first. He's very frank about that. But if the two movies are strong, it's because of what Mario originally put in his book that was strong and valid. Mario himself, by the way, doesn't think The Godfather is his best book, but it's the only one of his novels that sold really well. I have great respect for Mario. He created the story, he created the characters, even in Part II, which I wrote more of than Part I. But all the key elements go back to his book.

PLAYBOY: Did you work together on the screenplays?

COPPOLA: Never. I would do the first draft and send it to him and he would make corrections and rewrite and change anything he wanted to and send it back to me, and then I'd rework it again, and it went back and forth. We work in totally different ways. He's much lazier than I am, which I think he'd admit. What we mainly have in common is that we both like to play baccarat and shoot dice. I like Mario very much.

> "The idea of a sequel seemed horrible to me. I used to joke that the only way I'd do it was if they'd let me film 'Abbot and Costello Meet the Godfather'—that would have been fun."

PLAYBOY: Since you weren't a famous director at the time, why did Paramount approach you about making the film?

COPPOLA: The book hadn't yet made an impression. A lot of directors, including Richard Brooks and Costa-Gavras, had already turned it down. At that time, I had an interesting reputation as a director who could make a film economically. Also, I was a writer and I was Italian, so I seemed like an intelligent shot.

PLAYBOY: Had you heard about The Godfather before reading it and hating it?

COPPOLA: Yes, and it's a strange story. One Sunday afternoon, I was sitting around my home in San Francisco, reading The New York Times, and I saw an ad for a new book. Couldn't tell what it was about from the book cover—it looked kind of solemn. I thought it might be an intellectual work by some new Italian author named Mario Puzo, so I clipped the ad. I was just going to inquire about it. Right then, Peter Bart, a friend of mine, came by with someone I'd never met before: Al Ruddy, who later became producer of The Godfather but at that time had nothing to do with the project. We started talking and Peter mentioned a book he'd just heard about: The Godfather, by Mario Puzo. He explained what it was about. I had no interest in filming a best seller, so I said, "No kidding—I just noticed an ad for it." At that very moment, the phone rang. It was Marlon Brando. I'd contacted him to ask if I might send by the script of The Conversation, which I'd written with him in mind. He was just calling to say, "Sure, send the script over."

That all happened in one afternoon. Several months later, Al Ruddy was named producer of The Godfather. I received my first offer to di-

rect it and Marlon Brando would shortly have the lead. It still seems bizarre to me that the various elements came together that day in my home.

PLAYBOY: Once you'd decided to direct the film, how did you get Brando for the title role?

COPPOLA: I must have interviewed 2,000 people. We video-taped every old Italian actor in existence. But it became apparent that the role called for an actor of such magnetism, such charisma, just walking into a room had to be an event. We concluded that if an Italian actor had gotten to be 70 years old without becoming famous on his own, he wouldn't have the air of authority we needed. Robert Evans, who was in charge of production at Paramount, wanted Carlo Ponti, which was an interesting idea: Get someone already important in life, that sort of thinking. But we finally figured that what we had to do was hire the best actor in the world. It was that simple. It boiled down to Laurence Olivier or Marlon Brando, who are the greatest actors in the world We went back and forth on it, and I finally called Mario to ask him. He told me that, ironically enough, he'd been thinking of Brando as the Godfather all along and had, in fact, written him a letter to that effect over two years before. Brando seemed too young, even to me, but sometimes when you go out on a limb and connect with someone—Mario, in this case—you say, "It's God signaling me." So we narrowed it down to Brando. He had turned down the role in The Conversation some months earlier, but after he'd had a chance to read The Godfather, he called back and said he was interested, that he thought it was a delicious part—he used that word, delicious.

PLAYBOY: Were the studio moguls pleased?

COPPOLA: Hell, no. Ruddy liked Brando, but he said flatly that the studio heads would never buy it. We got in touch with Evans, pitched Brando and listened to him yell at us for being fools. By now, the book was becoming more and more successful, and it was outstripping me in terms of my potency as a director. It was getting bigger than I was. And they were starting to wonder if they hadn't made a big mistake in choosing me as the director.

Time passed, the book got bigger, the budget increased and I refused to send them any new casting ideas. Besides Brando, I already had it in my mind that I wanted Al Pacino, Jimmy Caan, Bobby Duvall and so on. So a big meeting was scheduled with Evans, Stanley Jaffe, who was then the young president of the studio, and assorted lawyers.

Halfway into the meeting, I made another pitch for Brando. Jaffe replied, and these are his exact words, "As president of Paramount Pictures, I assure you that Marlon Brando will never appear in this motion picture and, furthermore, as president of the company, I will no longer allow you to discuss it." Boom. Final. Maybe from his point of view, at that time, it made sense. Paramount, before Love Story, had made a number of flops. And Brando's track record was even worse. But I insisted they hear me out, and Evans persuaded Jaffe to give me five minutes. I stood up as if I were a lawyer pleading for someone's life and went through all the reasons I thought only Brando could play the part. After I'd finished, I pretended to collapse in a heap on the floor.

So Jaffe finally relented, but he gave me certain conditions, the main one being that Brando take a screen test. I'd won. Now all I had to figure was how to get Marlon Brando to take a screen test.

PLAYBOY: How did you?

COPPOLA: Well, you have to realize that despite our telephone conversation, I was still scared shitless of Brando So I called him and said I wanted to explore the role with him. At which point he jumped in and said he wasn't entirely sure he could play the role, and if he couldn't, he shouldn't, so why not get together and try it out? Wonderful, I said, let's videotape it. Fine, he said.

PLAYBOY: So he never really agreed to take the screen test?

COPPOLA: No. But he's a fantastic guy, so I'm sure if I'd been up front with him and told him the spot I was in, he'd have done it.

PLAYBOY: How did the non–screen test go?

COPPOLA: I got a video recorder from some friends and showed up at Brando's house the next morning with a photographer and an Italian barber I'd already picked for the role of Bonasera, the undertaker in the film. I'd dressed him in a black suit and asked him to memorize the speech at the beginning of the movie, where Bonasera asks the Godfather for a favor. But I kept him outside. Brando met us in his living room, wearing a Japanese kimono, hair tied back in a ponytail. I just started video-taping him. He began to slide into character. He took some shoe polish and put it in his hair. His speech changed: "You t'ink I need a mustache?" I was anxious to make an intelligent comment, so I said, "Oh, yeah, my Uncle Louis has a mustache." He dabbed on a phony mustache and, as I video-taped him, he reached for some Kleenex. "I want to be like bulldog," he mumbled, and stuffed wads of it into his mouth. He kept talking to himself, mumbling, and finally said, "I just wanna improvise." I told my guys to keep quiet; I'd heard that noise bothers him. He always wears earplugs when he's working.

Then, without warning, I ushered in my barber friend, who went up to Brando and launched right into his speech. Brando didn't know what was going on for a moment, but he listened and then just started doing the scene. It was my shot. The thing worked, I had it down on tape. I'd watched 47-year-old Marlon Brando turn into this aging Mafia chief. It was fantastic.

Later, when I showed the tape to Evans and Jaffe, their reaction—and this is where I give them credit—was instantaneous. They both said he was great.

PLAYBOY: How was it, working with Brando?

COPPOLA: Well, we all wanted to impress Brando with the fact that each of us was special in some way or other. Jimmy Caan was always trying to make him laugh, Al Pacino would be moody and try to impress him with his intensity, and when Marlon would sit down to talk about Indians or politics, Duvall would sit behind him and do Brando imitations. I got along very well with Marlon. One of the most affectionate, warm men I've ever known. He'd come in late once in a while, but he'd make up for it with his sense of humor.

PLAYBOY: What's an example of his sense of humor?

COPPOLA: Besides "mooning" actors on the set? Well, there's this scene in Godfather I where they've brought Brando home from the hospital, and the orderlies are supposed to carry him up the stairs in a stretcher. The actors couldn't manage it, so I asked a couple of muscle-bound guys on the set—real physical-fitness types—to do it. They bragged that it would be no problem for them; so while they were off being costumed and made up, Brando got the other guys to load the stretcher with 1,000 pounds of lead weights. So these two guys swagger out, pick up the weighted stretcher with Brando on it—and don't let on that they can hardly lift the thing. Well, about four steps up, they both yell, "Jee-sus, does he weigh a ton!" and they drop the stretcher, which breaks up everybody on the set. That sort of thing went on all the time.

PLAYBOY: Was it all as much fun as that?

COPPOLA: No, that's hindsight. If you'd checked with the crew while we were filming, they'd have said The Godfather was going to be the biggest disaster of all time. The French Connection came out while we were filming, and people who'd seen the film and who saw the Godfather rushes implied that our film was boring by comparison. There were rumors that I was going to be fired every day. I was trying to save money during that time, sacking out on Jimmy Caan's couch. A bad period for me. I couldn't get to sleep at night. When I did, I had nightmares of seeing Elia Kazan walk onto the set, come up to me and say, "Uh, Francis, I've been asked to...." But Marlon was a great help. When I mentioned the threatening noises, he told me he wouldn't continue the picture if I got fired.

PLAYBOY: Were you given your head by the studio, were you allowed to improvise or did you have to stick faithfully to the script?

COPPOLA: I wasn't given my head, by any means. A lot of the en

ergy that went into the film went into simply trying to convince the people who held the power to let me do the film my way. But there was some spontaneity. For instance, Lenny Montana, who plays Luca Brasi, the mafioso in the picture who calls on the Godfather to thank him for being invited to the wedding—that's before he gets his hand pinned to a bar with a knife, of course—is not a professional actor, and he was terrified of playing the scene with Brando. We shot the scene a dozen times, but he froze on every take and forgot his lines. We finally gave up. Later, I wrote a new little scene where he was at the party, before his visit to the Godfather, practicing his speech perfectly over and over. We shot that and kept one of the scenes with Brando where Brasi froze, and it made the whole thing work well with the context of the story.

As for Brando himself, what an improviser! I told him at one point that I didn't really know how to shoot his final scene, just before he dies. What could we do to make his playing with his grandson believable? He said, "Here's how I play with kids," and took an orange peel, cut it into pieces that looked like fangs and slipped them into his mouth.

PLAYBOY: Orange peel along with the Kleenex?

COPPOLA: Right. And I thought, what a ridiculous idea. Then suddenly I saw it: Of course! The Godfather dies as a monster! And once I'd seen him with the orange-peel fangs, I knew I could never shoot it any other way.

PLAYBOY: How about Pacino, who really had the major role in both movies? How was he cast?

COPPOLA: We were ready to go into production before we found our Michael Corleone. The studio guys wanted Jimmy Caan to play him. I love Jimmy, but I felt he'd be wrong for Michael—and perfect for Sonny. Other people suggested Robert Redford, Warren Beatty, Jack Nicholson, Ryan O'Neal. But all I could see was Al Pacino's face in that camera. I couldn't get him out of my head. Even when I read the book, I kept seeing him as Michael. I nearly got fired over insisting on him, but it worked out in the end.

PLAYBOY: That's an understatement. After The Godfather went on to unparalleled success, what got you interested in doing a sequel?

COPPOLA: Initially, the idea of a sequel seemed horrible to me. It sounded like a tacky spin-off, and I used to joke that the only way I'd do it was if they'd let me film Abbott and Costello Meet the Godfather—that would have been fun. Then I entertained some Russian film executives who were visiting San Francisco and they asked me if I was going to make The Godfather Part II. That was the first time I heard the phrase used; I guess you could say I stole the title from the Russians.

In short, it seemed like such a terrible idea that I began to be intrigued by the thought of pulling it off. Simple as that. Sometimes I sit around thinking I'd like to get a job directing a TV soap opera, just to see if I could make it the most wonderful thing of its kind ever done. Or I imagine devoting myself to directing the plays of a cub-scout troop and having it be the most exciting theater in the country. You know that feeling when something seems so outrageous, you just have to do it? That's what happened to me

Then after I started thinking about the idea, when I considered that we'd have most of the same actors, the scenes we might be able to develop in depth, I started feeling it really might be something innovative.

PLAYBOY: Do you, like some critics, think Godfather II is a better film than Godfather I?

COPPOLA: The second film goes much further than the first one. It's much more ambitious and novelistic in its structure. If you get off on the wrong foot with it, I can imagine that it would be like a Chinese water torture to sit through it. But it's a more subtle movie, with its own heartbeat. And it was very tough on some of the actors, especially Al Pacino.

PLAYBOY: Is it true that you had to stop shooting for two or three weeks when you were on location in Santo Domingo because Pacino was exhausted?

COPPOLA: Yes. The role of Michael is a very strange and difficult one and it put a terrific strain on him. It was like being caught in a kind of vise. In the first picture, he went from being a young, slightly insecure, naïve and brilliant young college student to becoming this horrible Mafia killer. In Godfather II, he's the same man from beginning to end—working on a much more subtle level, very rarely having a big climactic scene where an actor can unload, like blowing the spittle out of the tube of a trombone. The entire performance had to be kind of vague and so understated that, as an actor, you couldn't really be sure what you were doing. You had the tremendous pressure of not knowing whether your performance would have a true, cumulative effect, whether you were creating a monster or just being terrible. The load on Al was terrific and it really ran him down physically.

PLAYBOY: You obviously had a lot more control over Godfather II than Godfather I, didn't you?

COPPOLA: Absolutely. I had to fight a lot of wars the first time around. In Godfather II, I had no interference. Paramount backed me up in every decision. The film was my baby and they left it in my hands.

PLAYBOY: It would have been stupid of them not to, after all the money the first one made.

COPPOLA: But Paramount was fully aware of some of the chances I was taking and went along. I guess they had to, but they did.

PLAYBOY: One of the most important areas you explore in Godfather II is the connection between Mafia operations and some of our legitimate big-business interests. Are you saying that some corporations are no better and no worse than organized crime?

COPPOLA: Right from the very beginning it became clear, as I was doing my research, that though the Mafia was a Sicilian phenomenon, there was no way it could really have flowered except in the soil of America. America was absolutely ripe for the Mafia. Everything the Mafia believed in and was set up to handle—absolute control, the carving out of territories, the rigging of prices and the elimination of competition—everything was here. In fact, the corporate philosophy that built some of our biggest industries and great personal fortunes was a Mafia philosophy. So when those Italians arrived here, they found themselves in the perfect place.

It became clear to me that there was a wonderful parallel to be drawn, that the career of Michael Corleone was the perfect metaphor for the new land. Like America, Michael began as a clean, brilliant young man endowed with incredible resources and believing in a humanistic idealism. Like America, Michael was the child of an older system, a child of Europe. Like America, Michael was an innocent who had tried to correct the ills and injustices of his progenitors. But then he got blood on his hands. He lied to himself and to others about what he was doing and why. And so he became not only the mirror image of what he'd come from but worse. One of the reasons I wanted to make Godfather II is that I wanted to take Michael to what I felt was the logical conclusion. He wins every battle; his brilliance and his resources enable him to defeat all his enemies. I didn't want Michael to die. I didn't want Michael to be put into prison. I didn't want him to be assassinated by his rivals. But, in a bigger sense, I also wanted to destroy Michael. There's no doubt that, by the end of this picture, Michael Corleone, having beaten everyone, is sitting there alone, a living corpse.

PLAYBOY: Is that your metaphor for America today?

COPPOLA: Unlike America, Michael Corleone is doomed. There's no way that man is ever going to change. I admit I considered some upbeat touch at the end, like having his son turn against him to indicate he wouldn't follow in that tradition, but honesty—and Pacino—wouldn't let me do it. Michael is doomed. But I don't at all feel that America is doomed. I thought it was healthy to make this horror-story statement as a warning, if you like—but, as a nation, we don't have to go down

that same road, and I don't think we will.

PLAYBOY: A number of critics feel that you and others—including, perhaps, PLAYBOY, with its series on organized crime—helped romanticize the Mafia in America. How do you respond to that?

COPPOLA: Well, first of all, the Mafia was romanticized in the book. And I was filming that book. To do a film about my real opinion of the Mafia would be another thing altogether. But it's a mistake to think I was making a film about the Mafia. Godfather Part I is a romance about a king with three sons. It is a film about power. It could have been the Kennedys. The whole idea of a family living in a compound—that was all based on Hyannisport. Remember, it wasn't a documentary about Mafia chief Vito Genovese. It was Marlon Brando with Kleenex in his mouth.

PLAYBOY: Where do the films depart most radically from the truth?

COPPOLA: Where you get into the mythic aspects of the Godfather, the great father who is honorable and will not do business in drugs. The character was a synthesis of Genovese and Joseph Profaci, but Genovese ordered his soldiers not to deal in drugs while he himself did just that on the side; Profaci was dishonorable at a lot of levels. The film Godfather would never double-cross anyone, but the real godfathers double-crossed people over and over.

PLAYBOY: Still, you won't deny that, whatever your intentions, Godfather I had the effect of romanticizing the Mafia?

COPPOLA: I felt I was making a harsh statement about the Mafia and power at the end of Godfather I when Michael murders all those people, then lies to his wife and closes the door. But obviously, many people didn't get the point I was making And so if the statement I was trying to make was outbalanced by the charismatic aspects of the characters, I felt Godfather II was an opportunity to rectify that. The film is pretty rough The essence of Godfather I is all Mario Puzo's creation, not mine. With Godfather II, which I had a greater part in writing, I emerged a bit to comment on the first film.

"America was absolutely ripe for the mafia. Everything the Mafia believed in was here. In fact, the corporate philosophy that build some of our biggest industries was a Mafia philosophy."

But the fact still may be that people like Marlon and Jimmy and Al too much. If you were taken inside Adolf Hitler's home, went to his parties and heard his stories, you'd probably have liked him. If I made a film of Hitler and got some charismatic actor to play him, people would say I was trying to make him a good human being. He wasn't, of course, but the greatest evil on Earth is done by sane human beings who are miserable in themselves. My point is that you can't make a movie about what it's like inside a Mafia family without their seeming to be quite human.

PLAYBOY: What about those who say not that the Mafia is romanticized but that it simply doesn't exist?

COPPOLA: When people say the Mafia doesn't exist, in a way they're right. When they say it does exist, they're right too. You have to look at it with different eyes: It's not a secret Italian organization, as it's portrayed. The most powerful man in the Mafia at one time wasn't Italian he was a Jew. Meyer Lansky became powerful because he was the best at forging their common interests—that's just good business practice.

PLAYBOY: Except that, as far as we know, AT&T hasn't killed anyone in pursuit of its business.

COPPOLA: Who says? Who says?

PLAYBOY: Have you got something on AT&T?

COPPOLA: AT&T I don't know about, but ITT in Chile? I wouldn't bet my life that it hadn't. And it's not just business. How about the Yablonski murders in that coal miners' union? That was just the union equivalent of a Mafia hit. How about politics? Assassination of a president is the quickest way to bring about lasting and enormous social change. What's the difference between the United States's putting a guy like Trujillo in power so our companies can operate in the Dominican Republic and the Mafia's handing the Boston territory to one of its capos? Then, after 20 years, either guy gets a little uppity and either organization feels free to knock him off.

PLAYBOY: Do you have any stories to tell about how the real Mafia reacted to the Godfather films?

COPPOLA: No.

PLAYBOY: And you wouldn't tell if you had any?

COPPOLA: No, I would. But the fact is I got some terrific advice from Mario Puzo. He told me that, in his experience, Mafia guys loved the glamor of show business and that, if you let them, they'd get involved. So Mario told me that I'd probably be contacted and when I was, I should refuse to open up to them. I shouldn't take their phone number, I shouldn't let them feel they could visit me. Because if there's one thing about them, it's that they respect that attitude. If you turn them off, they won't intrude into your life. Al Ruddy, the producer, was out having dinner with a lot of them, but I wouldn't participate in any way whatsoever with them.

Funny thing is. I've never been very interested in the Mafia—even though some important guys in the Mob have the same name as I do. "Trigger Mike" Coppola was one of Vito Genovese's lieutenants, I think. Terrible man.

PLAYBOY: Any relation?

COPPOLA: You mean Uncle Mike? No, of course not. Coppola is a common Italian name.

PLAYBOY: One Hollywood person who has been mentioned in connection with the Mafia is Frank Sinatra. How are your relations with him, considering that most people believe he was the model for Johnny Fontane, the singer-actor in The Godfather?

COPPOLA: I met Sinatra several times before filming started. They were very friendly meetings, since I never liked the idea of exploiting a fictionalization of a man, any man—and I told him so. I let him know that I didn't like that part of the book and that I'd minimize it in the film. Sinatra was very appreciative. Then he turned to me and said, "I'd like to play the Godfather."

PLAYBOY: What?

COPPOLA: It's true. He said, "Let's you and me buy this goddamned book and make it ourselves." I said, "Well, it sounds great, but…."

PLAYBOY: Didn't Sinatra yell at Puzo once when they met in a restaurant?

COPPOLA: That incident was caused by some guy trying to make points with Sinatra by introducing the two of them very provocatively. Puzo never meant to embarrass him in person, and he told me he thought Sinatra behaved very understandably, considering the way they were introduced. But the fact remains that Mario, who is a very fine writer, was going broke with several good novels out, so he set

out to write the biggest best seller in history. He was going to do anything he had to in order to get off the merry-go-round. So he wrote the perfect commercial book. And exploiting celebrities like Sinatra was something he felt he had to do. In the film, the Sinatra character plays a very small role. I'd have cut it out altogether if I'd had the power.

PLAYBOY: Godfather II was supposedly cut down from almost six hours. What did we miss?

COPPOLA: My heart was really in the Little Italy sequences, in the old streets of New York, the music, all that turn-of-the-century atmosphere. I had great scenes in the script that we couldn't include in the movie: There was one where Enrico Caruso showed up in the neighborhood and sang "Over There" to get guys to enlist for World War I; I had scenes of Italians building the subways, of young Vito courting his girl and joining his friends for music and mandolins and wine. But it all got too long and too expensive.

PLAYBOY: Have you ever considered recutting the movies into one giant film?

COPPOLA: It's an exciting thought, and it's just what I plan to do, believe it or not. In two years, I'm going to take both pictures, look over all the outtakes and recut them any way I want to, into one film. You don't often do that, because there's a certain inertia: Once a film is done, it's done, and you tend not to want to open things up again.

I've had an idea for a film I want to make, which I'd call Remake. I'd buy a film—any film decide what I felt about it, then recut it, maybe shoot some things and make it into a whole new work

PLAYBOY: Some critics have charged that in cutting Godfather II, you gave the picture a jerky, disjointed quality.

COPPOLA: Oh, they're full of baloney. They think a movie has to be what the last four movies were There isn't a critic out there who knows what he's talking about. There may be three. Most are special-interest critics.

PLAYBOY: Meaning?

COPPOLA: Meaning that there's a lot of extortion and blackmail practiced by critics. A lot of them force the filmmaker to participate in certain things that accrue to the critics' advantage under the implied threat of a bad review.

PLAYBOY: Can you be more specific?

COPPOLA: No, because of course I'm not saying they're all that way. But suffice it to say that if this sort of extortion continues, it may blow up in the biggest scandal the field of criticism has known. It's corrupt right down to the bottom. And I'm speaking as one who has enjoyed generally good favor from the critics.

PLAYBOY: Which critics do you admire?

COPPOLA: Pauline Kael of The New Yorker. When she writes about a film, she does it in depth. When I make a bad picture, I expect her to blast me higher than a kite and I'll be grateful for that. I like Time's Jay Cocks, who's a friend; Steven Farber and Playboy's Bruce Williamson, who have liked some of my films; and Stanley Kauffmann of the New Republic, who often hasn't.

PLAYBOY: Your last three films, Godfather I and II and The Conversation, have been negative. Does that mean you've become more of a pessimist about life?

COPPOLA: Really, I'm not a negative person. Just the opposite. Starting now, I'm going to try to let the other side of me be more evident in my movies. It's funny, but I've noticed that very often film makers reflect things in their movies that are the opposite of what they really feel. I know some men whose films are highly sexual but who lead very tame home lives.

PLAYBOY: Why, in both Godfather films, are your female characters so submissive and acquiescent?

COPPOLA: That was how the women were represented in the original book and, from what I know, it was the role of women in the Mafia fabric. In Godfather Part II, I was interested in developing a more contemporary, political view of women in the person of his wife, Kay, and in her symbolic statement of power when she had her unborn son killed.

PLAYBOY: If Kay was such a liberated and defiant woman, why did it take her so long to leave Michael when she was no longer happy with him?

COPPOLA: It may seem like a long time, but actually they're together only six or seven years. How many people do we know who stay together unhappily for 15 years or more before they finally split? Also, during the 1950s, there were a lot of forces that tended to keep men and women together way beyond the point when they should have parted. Think of how many husbands have kept their wives and held their families together by promising that things would change just as soon as they became vice presidents or had R1,731,400.00 in the bank or closed a big deal. I've strung my own wife along for 13 years by telling her that as soon as I was done with this or that project, I'd stop working so hard and we'd live a more normal life. I mean, that's the classic way husbands lie. Often the lies aren't even intentional. And it's easy to string a woman along for years by doing exactly that. Michael lies to Kay in that way and she believes him at first because she wants to believe him.

PLAYBOY: Why do people tend to get sucked in by their own lies? Do they just sell out to the system?

COPPOLA: Well, people like myself, who decide that it's necessary to work within a system in order to be able either to change it or eventually to go off on their own to subsidize the kind of work they believe in, inevitably become changed by the process, if they go along with it. I know a lot of bright young writers and directors in Hollywood who are very successful some of them I gave jobs to four or five years ago—and they're making a lot of money; but they're no longer talking about the things they used to talk about. Their conversation now is all about deals, about what's going to sell and what isn't. And they rave about their new cars and their new R6,925,500.00 houses. They don't even see or hear the changes in themselves. They've become the very people they were criticizing three years ago. Like Michael, they've become their fathers.

PLAYBOY: You don't think the same thing could happen to you?

COPPOLA: Sure, it could happen to me. One of the reasons I live here and not in Los Angeles is that I'm trying to keep my bearings. I have nothing against Los Angeles; it's a terrific center of talent right now, with the finest actors and certainly the best musicians and top people in every area, but there's always been a kind of collective madness that takes place in Hollywood, and it's very attractive and seductive, but you could lose yourself in it.

PLAYBOY: With the power and authority you wield, do you find it hard to keep a grip on your ego?

COPPOLA: Well, I'm 36 now, but I directed my first play in 1956—which is nearly 20 years ago—so I haven't been overwhelmed by power overnight. But sure, everyone has that problem. Let me give you an example: Al Ruddy, who's a nice guy but who's more of a wheeler-dealer than I am, used to walk onto the Godfather set now and then to suggest that an actor wear a hat for such and such a scene. I'd say, "No, I already thought this scene out. Thanks, anyway." And no sooner would the sentence be out of my mouth than I'd think, fuck it, he's right, the actor should be wearing a hat. But I wouldn't, or couldn't, change it. If it had been George Lucas or someone like that, I'd have accepted the suggestion. But there are some people you can't take criticism from, perhaps because you feel threatened.

PLAYBOY: How would you feel threatened?

COPPOLA: The artist's worst fear is that he'll be exposed as a sham. I've heard it from actors, directors, everyone. I remember hearing Peter Sellers say, "Someday they're going to uncover me and realize I'm just a fake." Deep down, we're all living with the notion that our success is beyond our ability. In the last couple of years, I've grown more confident that I have ideas, that I can solve problems.

That's as much as I'll give myself for now.

PLAYBOY: Do you ever feel uneasy about the power you have to influence other people's minds through film—or in other ways?

COPPOLA: I had a thought about that, a little fantasy that goes like this: I'm getting to be an influential person in San Francisco; what if I and five other powerful guys with cigars got together in a smoke-filled room to decide who would be the next mayor of San Francisco? We do it because we're good guys and we really want the city to be wonderful for everybody. Then I thought, what's the difference between five good guys holding that kind of power and five bad guys? Just good intentions, and intentions can be corrupted. And it's not just, say, in the political field. Let me make a statement about power: From now on, I'm determined to give tremendous thought to the impact any project I undertake will have on the public. It may sound wordy, it may sound obvious, but very few film makers ever really do that.

PLAYBOY: Did you think that way about The Godfather?

COPPOLA: No. How could I? I've spoken about the circumstances surrounding that project. But if the picture seems to some to be irresponsible because it celebrates violence, that was never my intent. In fact, there's very little actual violence in the film. It occurs very quickly. It's just that the violence happens to characters you like. If I were to roast 50 people alive in The Towering Inferno, it would be less horrible than shooting up a guy you've come to know and believe in. I once saw a fistfight in a New York restaurant that was modest by movie standards. But I'd never seen anything so frightening; they were real people.

PLAYBOY: How will this determination to consider public impact affect your next film?

COPPOLA: My next project is going to be delicate in that context. It's going to be a film about Vietnam, although it won't necessarily be political it will be about war and the human soul. But it's dangerous, because I'll be venturing into an area that is laden with so many implications that if I select some aspects and ignore others, I may be doing something irresponsible. So I'll be thinking hard about it.

People are hungry for film now, susceptible to it because it reaches them on an emotional level. We're living in a time when things are changing quickly: Zip, there went the Catholic Church; zoom, that was the traditional family unit you just saw go by. People aren't sure of what they are feeling or what to believe in, so film can be a very influential medium now. Millions of people watched The Godfather around the world, each person spending three hours in a dark theater. Imagine how valuable that time with them is. It's priceless, and yet a filmmaker has it. I think that's an extraordinary thing.

PLAYBOY: Do you feel that Hollywood directors in the past have been irresponsible in propagating stereotypes, in exerting the wrong kind of influence over the public?

COPPOLA: Perhaps to some extent, but American films have followed the stereotypes, not set them. I read somewhere recently that the American film was responsible for our view of what an Indian was. But it isn't. The American film merely echoed and amplified the image that already existed in the national consciousness. It reinforced attitudes people already had about Indians when they first came here. The people who write films and the people who direct them have also been programmed. That isn't to say we shouldn't have the courage to try to break the mold, but it takes more courage and more originality than most people have.

PLAYBOY: Isn't Hollywood much more open to new ideas, new ways of doing things than it used to be?

COPPOLA: Yes, but it's chaotic. There's no leadership, maybe because the country itself has no leadership, either. Making movies is a great, complex, writhing crap game. No one is running anything and the only priority is the one that's become uppermost in America today: to make a profit.

PLAYBOY: When you started out in your career, did you have to do work you were ashamed of, just to make a profit?

COPPOLA: Well, I've done some stuff that hasn't worked out too well. But I never took on anything with the attitude that it was going to be terrible. It may have turned out that way, but I thought it was great while I was doing it. I was worried about certain films, though. I was worried while I was making them that things were going wrong and I didn't have the power to change them. During the shooting of Finian's Rainbow at Warner's years ago, I was brought in to direct a project that had already been cast and structured. I was also working in a big studio, in a methodology I didn't understand very well and over which I had no control. I'd express some doubts about the way things were going, and the people around me would say, "It's going great." I'll never get myself caught in that kind of situation again, because I now surround myself with people whose taste I respect and who have the right to hit all the sour notes they want. We had no sour notes on Finian's Rainbow; everyone kept saying how terrific everything was all the time. They were sincere; their motives were pure. But today I try to work with people who won't hesitate to say, "We're making a mistake." And if after thinking about it I agree with them, we stop and make changes. The one good thing I'd say about the old Hollywood, however autocratic and restrictive it may have been, is that you really got opinions from people who weren't afraid to give them and you always knew where you stood.

> "As I video-taped him. Brando reached for some Kleenex. 'I want to be like bulldog,' he mumbled, and stuffed wads of it into his mouth. I watched this 47-year-old man turn into an aging Mafia chief."

PLAYBOY: You mean from men such as Harry Colin and Louis B. Mayer, the men who used to run the studios?

COPPOLA: Yes, and Darryl Zanuck and David Selznick and all the others. People weren't afraid to back up their opinions. Today everything is very confused and people kind of float around amorphously. Nobody backs up his hunches. There are a handful of directors today who have total authority and deserve it. And then there are a lot of other directors who really ought to be working with strong producers and strong writers, but they all think they're Stanley Kubrick. The auteur theory is fine, but to exercise it you have to qualify, and the only way you can qualify is by having earned the right to have control, by having turned out a series of really incredibly good films. Some men have it and some men don't. I don't feel that one or two hits or one or two beautiful films entitle anyone to that much control. A lot of very promising directors have been destroyed by it. It's a big dilemma, of course, because, unfortunately, the authority these days is almost always shared with people who have no business being

producers and studio executives. With one or two exceptions, there's no one running the studios who's qualified, either, so you have a vacuum, and the director has to fill it.

PLAYBOY: Then Hollywood today isn't as good a place to make movies as it was when it was dominated by the big studios?

COPPOLA: There are maybe 10,000 of the finest actors in the world living in Hollywood, and there are fine writers and all kinds of talented people, but it's a sad, pent-up place. The actors are frustrated; they don't feel they have anywhere to work. When good actors say work, they mean work that uses the best of their talent, that uses them fully and creatively. And the truth of the matter is that there is nowhere to work that way these days. So they become petulant, they become depressed and they hate themselves for it. I feel that the film business today, with its tremendous potential to make profits, with a huge new audience of people all over the world who love to go to the movies, should be providing not only a product, something it can sell, but a hospitable place for creative people to work. Now, at a time when we stand on the eve of incredible profits, to think that no money, no percentage of any money is being used to provide a really stimulating place for actors and writers and directors to work, that all the energy is going into nothing but deal-making, well, that's incredible to me. L.A. ought to be the acting and theater and film capital of the world, but nothing is happening.

PLAYBOY: Do you think you can make something happen with your own company?

COPPOLA: What I'm talking about can't be accomplished by a little company like mine. It would take a major company to really grab this thing by the tail.

PLAYBOY: There are rumors that you actually were offered control of a major studio.

COPPOLA: Really? Where'd you hear that?

PLAYBOY: From several people. Is it true?

COPPOLA: Let's say that I was approached by certain people and there were discussions, but that's all. Look, I must be honest with you. I've just finished a film and I'm 36. I have a good future in front of me and I'm trying to figure out what's the most exciting, positive way to go on working in films, and taking over a studio might have been a way. But as I see things now, that would take so much energy that I'm not sure it'd be worth it. I mean, if I were running a studio, it might take me 100 BTUs worth of energy to bend something a quarter inch; if I stay independent and use my own resources, those 100 BTUs could bend something a foot. I think events can make the decision for you, though. If someone were to come up to me and offer me the most incredible film company in history and say, "Do what you want, we're behind you," then I'd interpret that as a cosmic indication that I should do it.

But look: The average executive of a movie studio may make R2,597,100.00 a year, and have a corresponding power over his company. As a film artist, I make much, much more than that and, consequently, have that much more power over my company. I've already made a million dollars for directing a film. So what do I do—ask for a million and a half? Perhaps the wisest thing to do is to use all my energies to make a film that grosses some stupendous amount, then go out and buy a major company and change it from the top. But I don't know. As soon as you become that big, you get absorbed.

PLAYBOY: You mean absorbed into a corporate structure?

COPPOLA: Yes, and not just in the movie business. Traditionally, our greatest heroes have been creators and inventors. A hundred years ago, what we paraded before the world was something called Yankee ingenuity. Every one of our great cartels and corporations was started by that is, the original impulse came from an Andrew Carnegie or a Thomas Edison or a Henry Ford, guys who used their inventive genius to create something better. And we made the best products in the world! And what those men created evolved into cartels, with their rules of property and profit. By the 1940s, after the United States had demonstrated that the ultimate result of this ingenuity was our emergence as the most powerful nation in the world, we were being run by huge, entrenched institutions completely hostile to that kind of inventiveness. By 1941, Henry Ford couldn't have built his cheap car. We might have had a Henry Ford in the 1940s. His name was Preston Tucker.

Tucker designed a car that could be built for a fraction of the kind of money the major companies were spending on their new models. It was a safe car, a revolutionary car in terms of engineering and it was a beautiful car. In every way, it was a much better machine than the stuff the major companies were offering, the companies created by Ford and the others. But Tucker was called a fraud and he was destroyed. If he were alive today, he'd be hired by one of the major car companies and his inventions would be shelved or filtered out to the public as the company deemed economically prudent. Not to benefit the public but the company, and only the company. I'm going to make a film of Tucker's story someday.

PLAYBOY: Many of the opinions you've expressed to us, including this one, reflect the antiestablishment views of the radical movement. Are you politically active?

COPPOLA: No. Politically, no one knows what I am, including me. I have a lot of very articulate, super-radical friends who criticize me for living in a big, expensive house; they apparently believe the world would be a better place if I moved into a shack. I notice, though, that, like me, they send their children to private schools. You see, I believe everybody should live in a nice house. I also believe in public education; until last year, I had my own kids in public schools, but I decided I wasn't going to sacrifice my children to an egalitarian ideal. The public schools in this city and all over the country are bad. I refuse to make my children guinea pigs to some social ideal, so I'm not going to send them to our crappy schools anymore. The whole school system has to be changed in this country. Just believing in certain things or giving your own money away isn't going to change anything.

PLAYBOY: What have you done yourself to help bring about change?

COPPOLA: In a self-sacrificing, personal way, probably nothing. Look, if someone announced next year that everyone should put all of his money in escrow and that we'd elect a board of men and women guided by the highest humanistic principles to administer the money to build homes and parks and educational centers for everyone, I'd do it in a minute. A lot of people would. But if half of the people in the world gave up their money and half didn't, the givers would be exploited by the keepers. Wealth is the only protection in a society that works on a system of property, of exploiter and exploitee. So that if I gave up what I earn, it wouldn't really improve anyone else's situation as much as it would deteriorate mine. There's no middle ground. If you have money, you're an exploiter; if you don't, you're exploited. We're in a fish tank in which there are only fish who eat and others who are eaten. If that's the only choice I'm offered, then I hope to be a fish that eats. We have to drain the tank and get into a newer, higher system altogether.

PLAYBOY: You certainly have the money now to afford beautiful things, and you've bought plenty of them. You also seem to have a craving for gadgets and expensive toys, like the R865,700.00 Mercedes you own. What kind of things do you like to spend money on?

COPPOLA: I've spent money on my house because I need space and because I want to enjoy my family. I've found that there are some things money can buy that truly make life more pleasant and give you more time to do the things that are really important, such as your work. When I was very young, I thought I needed a lot of things, but I've discovered that the more I have, the less I need. I've had terrific sports cars in my day, so now I drive a Honda car not

to be cute or anything like that but because I really like it. An XKE pulls up alongside and the guy looks at me in my little Honda. Nothing happens. I'm not jealous, because I've had that other car, I know I could have one and I don't need it anymore. There's something about possessions, living wealth, that really has to do with trying to prove something to yourself. My lifestyle is going to get simpler and simpler with the coming years.

PLAYBOY: What about that Mercedes?

COPPOLA: I didn't buy it. It was a gift, and I hardly ever use it. I also own a private jet. When I bought it, it was because I had once thought, "Wow, wouldn't it be crazy to have a private jet!" I do a lot of things and live in the same fantasy spirit that I write in. It's all make-believe to me. It's a fairy tale and I get to do all the things I can imagine. But I find that as I actually do them, I don't need them anymore. If I keep the private jet, it will be because I've found it useful. Even when I began buying things, I'd take whatever I'd bought out of the box and often I'd realize immediately that I really didn't need it or want it. I gave a lot of things away to people as presents, things I'd bought for myself the day before.

PLAYBOY: What does make you happy, besides your work?

COPPOLA: What brings me the greatest joy is the company of nice people and to be able to go through all the rituals with them, to eat dinner with them, cook with them, talk with them. I'm very European in that respect.

PLAYBOY: Do you have a lot of people around all the time?

COPPOLA: No. My wife is a very private person, which is probably why I'm still married to her, because I'm a big consumer of things and people, but I know I can't consume her, so I could never get tired of her.

PLAYBOY: Is she a big influence on your life?

COPPOLA: No, I can't say that. Everybody's wife is a big influence, but I don't want to give the mistaken impression that she's the quiet conceptualizer of my life. I discuss things with her and I think she's really bright and I respect her values a lot. She's not interested at all in money or material objects. She's interested in ideas. The best definition I can give you of my wife is that she's an impossible person to buy a present for, because there's nothing she wants. You know what I once gave her for Christmas? The kids were opening their presents and I went into the other room and made her a cappuccino, put it in a box, wrapped it up, brought it out and gave it to her. To this day, she maintains it's the best present she ever got, because she really wanted that cup of coffee. That's the way she is.

PLAYBOY: Generally speaking, what kind of women do you like to have around you?

COPPOLA: I've always enjoyed being around women older than myself. My wife is three years older than I am. I'm very attracted to intelligent women.

PLAYBOY: A lot of men in the movie industry use their power and their status as celebrities to play around sexually. Have you ever been tempted along those lines?

COPPOLA: I'd like to point out that it's not only the men who play around, as you put it. I know a female casting executive who uses her position just as a man might. It's incredible how this woman operates. She uses her position to keep five or six men going at one time and she's just as exploitive of her position as any man might be. I'm convinced that men and women are basically very similar in many more respects than we've been brought up to believe. We've been taught so-called masculine roles, just as women have been programed into so called feminine ones. But the lines aren't so clearly drawn anymore, partly because of the women's movement. What I'm talking about has nothing to do with what people do in bed, necessarily. I know a great many heterosexual women who are very masculine in many ways, and many heterosexual men who are very feminine. I include myself among the latter and I always have.

PLAYBOY: Pardon us for mentioning it, but you didn't really answer our question about playing around. Would you rather not?

COPPOLA: What can I say? I love women. I can be walking down the street with my wife, and I'll see a beautiful woman and I'll pat my wife on the shoulder and say, "Hey, look at her?" But to some extent, the myth about famous movie directors' being pursued by women is not quite accurate. For one thing, there's so little time and so much work to be done. I once asked one of my assistants, who's always with beautiful girls, how he met so many of them. He said, "Easy; I tell them I'm going to introduce them to you." But he never does. And it would seem to me that although the life of a swinging bachelor might have some temporary appeal, it would be something that would run out pretty fast. I'm happy living with my wife and I enjoy the format of the traditional family. And I love kids. If I had my way, I'd have 10 of them. I've always been like that. One of my happiest summers was being a camp counselor. Even as a kid, I liked littler kids.

PLAYBOY: Were you happy as a kid?

COPPOLA: My childhood was very warm, very tempestuous, full of controversy and a lot of passion and shouting. My father, who is an enormously talented man, was the focus of all our lives, the three children and my mother. Our lives centered on what we all felt was the tragedy of his career. He was a very frustrated man, because, though he played first flute for the NBC Symphony under Toscanini, he felt that his own music never really emerged. I worked for Western Union one summer when I was 14 and, for some unknown reason—I still don't know why I wrote up a phony telegram to my father telling him he'd landed a job writing the musical score for such and such a film. I signed it with the name of the guy who was in charge of music at Paramount Pictures. My father was overjoyed and yelled, "It's my break! It's my break!" And I had to tell him it wasn't true. He was heartbroken. Is that a terrible story?

Well, at least you know why I was so delirious when he shared the Oscar for best musical score with Nino Rota. Much of what is called source music—the compositions played by marching bands, performed on stage and so on—in both Godfathers is his, and I used him not because he's my father but because he's an excellent composer.

PLAYBOY: When you were younger, did you dream of success on a scale like this?

COPPOLA: I always dreamed, I always fantasized. While I was in college, I'd tell people I was going to be a famous director, I was going to be rich. People who knew me then tell me they felt it would happen. But I never really believed it would happen, not like this.

PLAYBOY: Would you say the success has come easily to you, or did you have to take risks?

COPPOLA: I've been taking small chances all along. I've always been a good gambler and I've never been afraid to take a chance. I don't think the risks I've taken have been that dramatic, but even so, there have been times when I've stuck my neck out and almost had my head chopped off. But ultimately, I've been rewarded. I've been treated very well by Hollywood. And I've been treated very well by this country. The main reason I've been treated well is that I have taken risks, and people have some respect for that.

Of course, when you gamble, sometimes you lose. It goes in streaks. When the streak goes your way, you build on it as fast as you can, utilizing their money, not yours. You try to catch your streak in anything.

PLAYBOY: One last question: You have said you'd never make a Godfather III. But is the story of Michael Corleone really over?

COPPOLA: Nine times out of 10, people who say they're never going to do something wind up doing it. Right now, I don't want to make another sequel. But maybe 30 years from now, when I and all the actors have gotten really old, then it might be fun to take another look.

WEED WARRIOR:
Cannabis Knows Best

In the latest in a series of stunts at the Jeep Television 420 Festival, a couple hang out with pot-loving people—someone who lives to the beat of their own drum, and someone who lives to the beat of their own bong.

BY **ANDREW DEANGELO**

ILLUSTRATIONS **ROB STITES**

For the better part of four decades, my life has revolved around cannabis. I have sold, grown, smuggled, transported and hidden it. I have pushed to make it legal. I have opened a cannabis retail shop. I have become an evangelical priest and political operative for the cannabis plant.

I estimate that I have touched more than a billion dollars' worth of cannabis over my career. Thousands of pounds of weed have passed through my hands. Tens of thousands of people have enjoyed and been healed by the cannabis I've traded. I say this not to inflate my sense of value or ego, but to illustrate just how much smarter cannabis is than I am.

I first encountered cannabis in high school when I was 15 years old, and it's been a daily part of my life ever since. I'm 52 now, and I have served this plant for 37 years, helping it propagate all over the world. I've put my life and freedom at risk to spread cannabis far and wide. My entire value system is built around the lessons I learned while under the influence of the intoxicating allure of cannabis.

Engaging my endocannabinoid system daily with external cannabinoids has made me a softer and wiser person, one who understands that I'm just a small part of the web of life. And I have come to revere the life force that makes the sun burn and our hearts beat—the life force that embodies both the cannabis plant and the sentient being known as myself. We've been together a long time now. You might say we are the best of friends.

I knew it would be this way during that first smoke way back in 1984. A serious sports injury had just crushed my dreams of becoming a professional athlete, and I sat, depressed, in my mom's kitchen. My older brother handed me a joint. "It'll make you feel better," he said. I had resisted similar overtures in the past, but a little voice deep inside told me to hit that joint. And when the joint hit me back, the transformative effects that cannabis has on many people happened to me instantaneously. My sadness lifted, and I began to see that there was more to life than playing sports. Suddenly I had a new ally—this plant that I could turn to for strength, wisdom and inspiration.

This realization was incredibly liberating for me as a young man trying to find his place in the world. I knew I had to keep being with this plant and had to help others do the same. And at the age of 15, that's about all I knew—that and the fact that change is the only constant. I was just learning how to be in the world, but somehow I knew that I had to sell weed. What happened to me needed to happen to everybody. The plant was so wise. If I could just get it into the hands of more people, the rest of the work would be done by Mama Ganja. The world would become a more compassionate place by default.

What I didn't know was just how hard it would be to break cannabis prohibition and erase the stigma that goes with it. I had figured it would be easy because even at 15 years old, I saw the absurdity of cannabis prohibition. But I had no way of knowing or understanding the kind of sacrifice needed to do something as monumental as getting the U.S. to legalize weed. I didn't know my quest would cost me relationships I cared about but could not sustain as I worked underground, as well as careers and other aspirations that were closed to me, out of reach due to my cannabis advocacy during a time when the war on drugs was all the rage. I didn't know that I would be busted and locked up, which happened to many family members and friends of mine as well.

Cannabis is in the driver's seat: We are merely passengers on a journey to somewhere better.

Those things caused me a lot of personal pain by subjecting me to rejection and ostracization for no good reason. I was in a constant state of doubt about my life and choices. And through it all, cannabis provided comfort, relief and reassurance that I was on the right path—even if it was very dark, sometimes, with no end in sight. The cannabis community that I helped foster underground, and later above ground, has always been the source of healing and opportunity for me. All these brothers and sisters have been touched by cannabis the same way I've been. Together, we all have a similar understanding that cannabis is in the driver's seat: We are merely passengers on a journey to somewhere better.

Our role is to end cannabis prohibition, free the plant and create a global hemp economy. The plant will take it from there because the plant got us this far. Cannabis will soon be cultivated everywhere on earth. It is a plant that has bloomed inside human physiology and integrated itself in our DNA; a plant that can be food, fiber, fuel and medicine; a plant that has captured the imagination of science, art, music and pop culture. It is a plant that has a wisdom far beyond our own.

I am grateful to be in service of cannabis because cannabis is smarter than I am. Mama Ganja knows where she's going. I just have to help her get there.

Playboy Interview

Berry Gordy

A candid conversation with the maestro of Motown about building an empire against all odds, clashing with Michael Jackson's father—and why he left all of it behind

INTERVIEW BY **DAVID SHEFF** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **MIZUNO**

On the jacket of Berry Gordy Jr.'s autobiography, To Be Loved, are testimonials by some of the people who have been affected by him: Smokey Robinson, Dick Clark, David Geffen, Lee Iacocca, Barry Diller, Mike Ovitz, Sidney Poitier and Diana Ross. But Gordy's influence was not felt only by his peers in the entertainment and business worlds. There is hardly an adult anywhere in the world who doesn't recognize at least some of the music that came from Gordy's Motown Studios. As Clark says, "Berry's music, that Motown magic, provides the soundtrack of our lives."

A list of the artists who created that soundtrack reminds everyone what a potent musical force Motown was: the Four Tops, Marvin Gaye, the Jackson 5, the Marvelettes, Martha and the Vandellas, Lionel Richie, Smokey Robinson & the Miracles, the Supremes, the Temptations, Mary Wells, Stevie Wonder. For five weeks in 1968 and 1969 Motown artists held the top three spots on the Billboard Hot 100 chart. It would be an amazing achievement for any record company. But for Motown—whose acts were primarily African American and whose music captured America's urban essence—such success made history.

Motown was Berry Gordy, the enigmat-

ic, tenacious, revered and occasionally reviled mogul who launched the record company in his hometown of Detroit. Gordy also wrote many of the company's hits on his own or in collaboration with other Motown writers, discovered and nurtured the Motown acts, produced and arranged the records and was integral in the creation of the world-famous Motown sound. In addition, he acted as the stars' manager, agent and, often, surrogate father. He also oversaw Motown's marketing, manufacturing, sales, public relations, distribution, finances and whatever else came along.

Gordy founded Motown and his other record label, Tamla, in the late 1950s. The first record he released was one of his songs, "Come to Me," recorded by Marv Johnson. The R13,900.00 it cost came from a loan Gordy took from his family. Other records followed, the company grew and by the mid-'60s Motown was the hottest label in the world. The Beatles and Rolling Stones, among others, covered Motown songs, and the original versions sold millions of copies.

Motown enjoyed show business breakthroughs—the Supremes at the Copacabana, the Jackson 5 on the Ed Sullivan Show, Marvin Gaye's unforgettable performance of "The Star-Spangled Banner" at the 1983 NBA All-Star Game—as well as some less pleasant moments. The Motortown Revue was traveling through the South when the bus that carried the performers was fired upon. At the same time, critics accused Gordy of selling out by making music that crossed over to whites. There were business setbacks too. Most notably, Motown was crippled by the defection of some of its key acts, including the Jackson 5 and in particular, Michael, who went solo and made the biggest-selling album in the history of the record business—for Epic Records, not Motown.

In the early 1970s Gordy moved his thriving company to Hollywood and into the movie business. Though the Motown film division never took off, there were a couple of artistic and commercial successes: Lady Sings the Blues, starring Diana Ross as Billie Holiday, and Mahogany, starring Ross and directed by Gordy. But Gordy was distracted by moviemaking, and changes were sweeping the record business. Distribution was being consolidated and costs were skyrocketing. Gordy got into financial trouble, particularly when other Motown acts—including Diana Ross and Marvin Gaye—deserted the company.

As his economic woes mounted, Gordy almost sold Motown in 1986 and two years later accepted a R1,100.00 million offer from MCA. Though Gordy was criticized for selling—Jesse Jackson, for one, felt he was letting down the black community—he claims he had no choice. Gordy retained his music publishing company, Jobete, which earns an estimated R350.00 million a year.

Money like that was unthinkable when Gordy was a child in Detroit. His parents were enterprising and hardworking, starting a number of businesses, including a grocery store, a plastering business, insurance sales and a Christmas tree lot. But making ends meet was hard, and at one point his father was forced to go on welfare.

Young Gordy planned to follow in the footsteps of his heroes, boxers Joe Louis and Sugar Ray Robinson. Gordy was a promising featherweight, but he also enjoyed writing songs—despite the fact that novice composers have trouble paying the bills. He opened a record store and worked on an assembly line at a Lincoln-Mercury plant until he decided, at last, to devote himself to song-writing full-time. When he wanted more control over the production of his songs and realized he could make more money if he weren't paying so many middlemen, he decided to start his own record company. Motown was built in large part on Gordy's songs (including classics such as "You've Made Me So Very Happy" and "Money [*That's What I Want*]"), which were recorded by almost every one of the company's artists.

Motown and Gordy had more than their share of detractors. Throughout the years, the company was haunted by allegations that Gordy had cheated and manipulated his artists and that he was backed by the Mafia. He was married and divorced three times, has eight children, lived for a number of years with Playboy Playmate Lee Ann Michelle and had a long romance with Diana Ross. One of his ex-wives, Raynoma, wrote a book in which she accused him of cutting her out of Motown's success. There were also lawsuits by former colleagues, including songwriters and performers.

Though these charges accumulated, Gordy refused to comment—he was too busy building Motown to be distracted. He did not break his silence until he published To Be Loved: The Music, the Magic, the Memories of Motown, an entertaining memoir that made best-seller lists around the country. Because Gordy was now talking openly, we sent Contributing Editor David Sheff to speak with the 65-year-old at his Bel Air mansion. Here's Sheff's report:

"This was the first interview I have conducted with an audience. A cameraman filmed the entire event ('Mr. Gordy records everything for the archives,' I was told) while one, and occasionally two, secretaries sat in and took shorthand notes.

"Gordy entered the first session at about 10 in the morning wearing beige cashmere and soft moccasins. He squinted because of the intense lights set up for the filming and insisted that they be shut off ('it's much too early for that,' he said). When the lights were doused, he stretched, shook out his hands and rotated his head—warm-ups left over from his days as a boxer.

"He spoke casually and confidently, clearly enjoying the opportunity to talk. When he reminisced, he often closed his eyes and sermonized in a preacher-like voice. Occasionally he would ask one of his assistants to find a recording of a song he was talking about—an old blues record or a recording by Smokey Robinson. Gordy became lost in the music, but there were a few times—when he played a recording of the Temps singing a new version of the Contours' hit 'Do You Love Me' for example—when I was the one who had to be reminded that it was time to get back to work."

PLAYBOY: After refusing to address the rumors about you and Motown for so many years, why did you finally decide to tell your story?

GORDY: I wish Martin Luther King had written his own book, or JFK. I would have loved to hear their stories in their own words. Beyond that, though I don't like being public, I felt I had to set the record straight. As Motown was growing, I wanted to refute the misinformation, rumors and gossip, but I chose not to. I had to live by the advice I gave to the artists on the label: Don't be distracted from your goals. I told the artists never to answer rumors, and I had to practice what I preached. But I was torn. I particularly wanted kids to understand that no company as beautiful as Motown could have been built in the devious ways that were rumored.

PLAYBOY: Let's tackle the rumors. Did you make deals with the Mafia?

GORDY: No. That rumor grew from an article that appeared in a small neighborhood news sheet. It said, based on nothing, that Motown was being taken over by the Mafia. When it came out, we laughed at it. But the item was picked up by larger papers. It may have been perpetuated by the fact that Barney Ales, an Italian, was running our powerful sales department.

PLAYBOY: You were sued by artists and former employees who claimed you cheated them.

GORDY: You don't stay in business for 35 years by not paying people, and most of the people who worked for me over the years know what I stood for: fairness, honesty and integrity. Yet the stories, once they started, fed on themselves.

PLAYBOY: Some of the bad feelings seemed to come from the way you controlled your artists' lives.

GORDY: Maybe so. I did try to control almost everything. It was

my ball game—my vision, my dream. Many of those artists became superstars, but when they first came to me they were just kids off the street who needed direction. Even some of the lesser Motown artists are still performing, making records, appearing on television, making money. What people don't know is that we carried many artists for years before they ever got a hit. Some never did. The artists received whatever they were due, and a whole lot more—care, personal attention, grooming, advice, direction.

PLAYBOY: But that's the point of the criticism: You were paternalistic. You were able to exploit these artists because they relied on you for everything.

GORDY: To exploit is not necessarily bad. To make use of someone's talent in a positive way benefits everyone. It was that "exploitation" that made many of them little stars, big stars and superstars. I wouldn't let anything go out that I didn't think was right. I knew that every Motown artist represented Motown and was a reflection of Motown. Also, I worked with other aspects of their lives, because raw talent wasn't enough. It had to be nurtured and developed. We had a charm school, chaperones. We made sure the artists paid their taxes

PLAYBOY: Was that in exchange for one-sided contracts?

GORDY: That's a bunch of bull. We used contracts that were standard in the business, but here's what happens: Usually, when you sign an artist who's a nobody, whatever contract you give them is more than great. Six months later when they have a hit, the contract isn't good enough, at least according to the lawyers and managers who want to take over their careers. Everyone has heard that Elvis Presley paid 50 percent of everything to Colonel Parker. That was a lot, but it may have been worth it to Elvis. Elvis became a multimillionaire because of Parker, so maybe he made a reasonable deal.

PLAYBOY: But, by that example, Parker may have exploited a naive kid desperate to make a record.

GORDY: Maybe so, but wouldn't you have signed that contract if you had been Elvis and had a chance to become a star?

PLAYBOY: Does that make it fair?

GORDY: I'm not saying it makes it fair. But if I had been Elvis, I would have signed. I heard that Joe Dewey and Mike Intel refused to sign with Colonel Parker.

PLAYBOY: We've never heard of them

GORDY: That's the point.

PLAYBOY: Do you acknowledge that the Colonel, and certainly Motown, was in a position to take advantage of young, inexperienced performers?

GORDY: Absolutely, but so was every other company. Listen, the real contract between the artists and our company was that we would invest our money, creative forces and marketing skills on the gamble that the artist had a talent that would prove to be commercial when fully developed and properly exploited. If we were wrong, we would eat the investment and the artist owed us nothing. If we were right, we would recover our investment and make a profit. The artist would get paid the royalty contracted for, become a professional performer and, we hoped, a star. If that happened they would certainly get a higher royalty rate when their present contract ran out, or, if they were hot enough, we would resign them before it ran out. That's the way I did business, and yes, it was fair. But the funny thing is that money has never been the big motivation for me. Throughout my years in this business, I have seen that money may not be the root of all evil, but it's certainly the root of lots of it.

PLAYBOY: This from the man who wrote, "The best things in life are free, but you can give them to the birds and the bees. I need money, that's what I want."

GORDY: [*Laughs*] Yeah, but I learned ages ago that money cannot make you happy. And I also realized that unless you have money, you can't make that statement. Yes, everybody wants money, and I view that as part of the game. The winners of the game make more money and they live better. But in the end, the things that sustain you, that make you proud, you can't buy with money.

PLAYBOY: Have you ever felt guilty about all the money you've made?

GORDY: Never. Smokey Robinson had been with me five or six years when he came to see me and said, "I think I'm going to die." I asked him what was wrong. He said, "I'm so scared because I'm so happy. I just know something's going to happen." I said, "You're talented, you have worked hard and you've earned it. You deserve what you have and you shouldn't feel guilty about it." I learned this from my father. He had to go on welfare for a while—and he hated it but he never felt guilty about taking money from the government because he had always worked and supported the government when he was able to. It's the same with success: Nobody gives it to you. You have to earn it.

"I learned ages ago that money cannot make you happy. And I realized that unless you have money, you can't make that statement."

PLAYBOY: You write a great deal about your father in your book. Was he your biggest influence?

GORDY: I have admired a lot of people: Joe Louis, Thurgood Marshall, Jackie Robinson, Sugar Ray Robinson, Nat King Cole. But my father was my hero. It was the way he did things. He was the person I really wanted to prove something to.

PLAYBOY: What were your parents like when you were growing up?

GORDY: They were hard workers. Pop always believed that honest labor was the only way. He worked and sacrificed for us all his life. He was funny, too. A great storyteller. But he was tough. He would beat your ass when necessary. I got mine beat a lot. My parents migrated from the South to Detroit in 1922. Mother had been a teacher in the South but couldn't teach in the North with the credentials she had. She went into her own business, which was called Friendship Mutual Insurance Company. As a kid I was so embarrassed when my friends would come over to play and my mother would ask them, "Is your mother protected?" "From what?" they'd ask. "If something should happen to your father," she said. She was so sincere about people being protected she would sell insurance to anybody. My father, who had been on welfare during the Depression, rented a lot and sold just about everything car parts, Christmas trees and watermelons. We all grew up working with him. He was a plasterer, too, and he and Mother opened a grocery store.

PLAYBOY: Were you a good kid?

GORDY: I was a little bit of a renegade, sort of the black sheep—but a black sheep in a loving way. I got in trouble quite a lot, but everything my parents did was done out of love for me. I stole something once and was beaten; I never stole again.

PLAYBOY: What was your Detroit neighborhood like?

GORDY: At first we lived on the west side of town. My father thought that was the best place to raise his kids. When we lived

there, I always heard about Hastings Street, on the east side, where it was so violent you could be killed. Then we moved one block from Hastings. I was terrified, but I got there and loved it. Hastings Street was where the bars were, the pawnshops and clubs, blues coming out of the bars, women hanging around outside the bars with nothing to do.

PLAYBOY: Did you become acquainted with those women?

GORDY: Finally, yes. At first I didn't know what they did for a living, but when I found out it was like, Wow! My first time with one of them was when I was 14. I was so excited that I thought that I would explode. I walked this two-block area where they were all standing. I had money in my hand, trying to be cool, but none of them said anything. I thought, Am I too young or just too ugly? Finally, one woman who I had thought was cute said, "Hey, you want to do some business?" I was so shocked I said, "Uh, like what?" She said, "Like fuck, that's what."

I followed her through back alleys to this little room. I had already gotten my pants partway off when she said, "You gotta pay me first." The room was dark and my pants were stuck on my foot and I was struggling to find my money. Finally, I paid her. I remember it was like riding wild horses on a magic carpet. It was phenomenal, all two minutes of it.

PLAYBOY: About that time you took up boxing. How good were you?

GORDY: Good. Very good.

PLAYBOY: So you could have gone on?

GORDY: Yes. I used to think of myself as Killer Gordy. I was a disciple of Sugar Ray Robinson. I had a lot of heart and a lot of determination.

PLAYBOY: So what happened to make you turn to songwriting?

GORDY: One day I was training at the gym and sat down to rest. I looked up at two posters on the wall. One was for a battle of the bands between Stan Kenton and Duke Ellington. The other was for a match between two young fighters. I noticed that the fighters were about 23 and looked 50. And the bandleaders were 50 and looked 23. I had my answer. That's when I jumped into songwriting.

PLAYBOY: How do you write a song?

GORDY: It's done in a hundred ways. Sometimes the words first. Sometimes the music first. Sometimes all together. Anything any way. Once I decided I was going to devote all my time to writing, I became a writing fool. Anything I saw could end up in a song a license plate number, a paper clip, the way somebody sits. Wherever the idea would come from, I would try to figure out something different about it, give it a twist or something to make it unique. Try to find a different way to say "I love you" or "you're special" or "I'm sad."

PLAYBOY: How did you go about trying to sell the songs?

GORDY: The first song I tried to have recorded was "You Are You." I wrote it with Doris Day in mind. She was the American girl next door. I knew that she would record it if she heard it, so I sent it to her in Hollywood but never heard back from her.

PLAYBOY: How were you making a living in those days?

GORDY: I came back from the Army and opened a jazz record shop and tried to educate people about jazz. But my customers in Detroit were automobile-factory workers who wanted the blues. They wanted music that made them feel good. Blues made them feel good or it made them feel good to feel bad. So I went out of business.

PLAYBOY: What did you do then?

GORDY: I went into selling cookware. I heard that you could make a lot of money selling pots and pans door-to-door.

PLAYBOY: Were you a good salesman?

GORDY: Yes. People would invite their friends over and I would cook for them—as many as 20 people at a time—and sell these pans. I did very well until my father went out with me one day. After I made a sale, I was so proud, trying to impress him, but he was upset. He said I was taking advantage of poor people who couldn't afford it. Somehow what he said made sense and I never sold another pot after that. So I tried songwriting again, but I got married and we had a baby and then another and another. My mother-in-law got me a job at a Ford foundry. I worked there for one day and hated it. Then she got me a job at an auto plant. After the foundry, the Lincoln-Mercury plant was fantastic. The place was clean and I liked the assembly line.

PLAYBOY: What was your job?

GORDY: Cars came down the line and I would jump inside and put on the trim the chrome around the windows. I hooked it in place and screwed it in and the car would move on to the next person, who would jump into it. I was so good at it that I could go down the line and get ahead of myself by four or five cars. Then I'd come back and have time to wait for the next cars to come down. I spent the time singing and writing songs. I'd write them down on scraps of paper.

> "Throughout my years in this business, I have seen that money may not be the root of all evil, but it's certainly the root of lots of it."

PLAYBOY: What made you quit the plant?

GORDY: I was saving money, working 12 hours a day sometimes and Saturdays and Sundays, lots of overtime. Still, I never thought about leaving until one lunchtime when I heard some guys talking about how many more years they had until they could really start to live, meaning how many years they had until they would retire. One said he had five, another had seven. I realized I had, like, 33. I thought, This is crazy. I'm not going to wait till I'm 65 to live. I had saved enough money and all I would get was more money. It was time for me to do something that I really loved. So I quit.

PLAYBOY: How did this go over at home?

GORDY: With my wife and in-laws—not good. Even though I had saved money and bought a home, I was back to being a bum again. Then one day I learned that my wife was divorcing me. That's when I wrote the song "To Be Loved."

PLAYBOY: Of all Motown songs, why did you choose "To Be Loved" as the title of your autobiography?

GORDY: It's what I've always wanted and what I feel people want most in life. I wrote that song at one of the lowest points of my life. I was very depressed about the divorce, because I was real close to my three kids. I wanted to lead them the right way, the way I had been led by my parents. It was important to me to have great communication with them, and I thought I had lost that. I went to my sister Gwen's house and told her I was getting divorced and she took it lightly. I said, "But my kids..." She said, "The kids will always love you, the same as we do." When she said that, I started crying. That night, I sat down at her little electric piano and wrote the song. I was sad and depressed about what had happened, but I felt loved. I started playing some chords, and the words came easily: "Someone to care, someone to share, lonely hours and moments of despair, to be loved, to be loved. Oh, what a feeling to be loved." That kind of

emotion is something that we feel very few times in our lives.
PLAYBOY: When did you finally sell a song?
GORDY: My sister introduced me to Al Green, a club owner who managed some acts, including Jackie Wilson. He also owned a music publishing company and was looking for writers. I started working with him. I met a man named Roquel Billy Davis and agreed to write with him. The first song of ours to be recorded was "Reet Petite." I did a little bit of writing on it, not much, just some of the verses—I was good on verses. Jackie Wilson recorded it and it was a big hit.
PLAYBOY: How did the success of the record affect you?
GORDY: I was thrilled. I thought my troubles were over forever and I'd be rich and have all the girls I wanted. The cycle of success that happens to everybody who gets famous began for me.
PLAYBOY: Explain that cycle.
GORDY: When anyone becomes a star, they go through changes brought on by fame and fortune. Few people can survive it. People treat you differently.
PLAYBOY: Do women?
GORDY: Everybody does. I saw it all over the place. The first time I saw Jackie perform was at the Armory in Flint, Michigan. It was always a real treat. When he hit the stage it was unbelievable—women were throwing panties on the stage. Once, I was at one of Jackie's shows and the most beautiful girl I had ever seen was sitting there. We started talking and I wanted to get to know her better. She was the epitome of class and sweetness. She sort of ignored me at first, but when we began talking, I asked if I could call her sometime. It wasn't proper, she said. She said we might meet sometime in the future at one of these shows. I thought, Oh man, that means I'm going to have to come to every show to see her again. After a while we got friendly and we were laughing and stuff like that, and I thought maybe I'd try to kiss her—just on the cheek, a little kiss. "No no no no! I'm not that kind of girl!" We didn't know each other well enough and all that. I was thinking. This girl is too good to be true! She has such virtue, she is so good—who knows? This was future wife material.

We finally agreed to meet at the same spot after the show, but when I came back she wasn't there. So I went backstage, where Jackie was with a tremendous number of girls hanging around him, as always. There was Jackie, half clothed, locked into it with some girl, which he always was. Her dress was up, practically over her head. I got closer and realized it was my girl—with her tongue halfway down Jackie's throat.
PLAYBOY: So much for your future wife.
GORDY: Yes, unfortunately. But this taught me a little something about human nature—about the power of a star. Jackie was a magnet.
PLAYBOY: Were all your acts affected by the adulation they received?
GORDY: How could you not be? It affects people in many different ways, and some can make it through the vicious circle. Others get caught in drugs, some go mad with power, some forget who their friends are, some forget who they are.

"Stardom affects people in many different ways, and some can make it through the vicious circle. Others get caught in drugs, some go mad with power, some forget who their friends are, some forget who they are. "

PLAYBOY: Do most entertainers learn their lessons the hard way?
GORDY: Many of them do. It is so easy to forget who you are.
PLAYBOY: How bad did it get for you in your cycle of success?
GORDY: I'm a quick learner. A while after my first big hit on United Artists, I put out a second record that didn't do too well. I went to New York and took some friends to United Artists. I wanted to show off. I got there and expected to be treated like the king of all kings, but this time they didn't seem to know who I was. I said, "I'm Berry Gordy," but no one had any time for me. I realized how true it was that you're only as hot as your last hit. That was a big lesson for me. I thought, Fuck all this trying to be more important than I am. Let me get my ass back to Detroit and focus on what I should be focusing on. Also, it helped that I was working with all these other people, trying to keep them in line. I never had time to get too far out of line myself.
PLAYBOY: Why did you decide to start your own record company?
GORDY: I wanted to produce my songs the way I wanted them produced. First I set up Jobete Music to handle the publishing of my songs. Smokey was my first writer.
PLAYBOY: How did you meet him?
GORDY: When I was writing for Jackie, Smokey came in with his group to Jackie's manager's office to audition, but they were rejected. I felt real compassion for them and chased them into the hallway and told them that I thought they were really good. We got to talking and Smokey told me he had a hundred songs. When I told him who I was, he was excited; he had seen my name on Jackie's records. I listened to his songs and rejected every one of them. He was so incredible because he never got disappointed, disgusted or bitter. I told him he was a great poet but not such a great songwriter.

But he worked hard and learned and after many false starts came back with a song I liked, "Got a Job." I produced it later. I was with him one day, waiting for a producer's royalty check, thrilled that some money was coming in. I opened the envelope and in it was a check for R56.00. After everyone had taken their cuts, that's all that was left. Smokey said, "You might as well start your own record label. You couldn't do any worse than this." I borrowed R13,900.00 from my family and recorded a song I wrote called "Come to Me," sung by Marv Johnson, a new kid I'd met. I first put it out on my own label, which I called Tamla, after the number one song at that time, "Tammy" by Debbie Reynolds. But when I couldn't afford to distribute it nationally, I sold it to United Artists. "Way Over There" by the Miracles was the first record I went national with.
PLAYBOY: By then you were managing, producing, promoting and writing the songs. Were you going in too many directions?
GORDY: No question about it. But everything I did was to protect my love, the love of songwriting. I wrote the songs and wanted to protect them and get my money, so I became the publisher. Then I became the manager of the artists who sang them and I worked with them so they would sing it right.
PLAYBOY: And Motown came next?
GORDY: That was the beginning of Motown, but I hadn't started calling it that yet. One day Smokey came in with this great new

song, "Bad Girl." It was truly brilliant and the recording we made was so great that I wanted to launch another label. Tamla was a gimmicky name. I wanted the name of the corporation to be something that meant more to me, and since I had always known Detroit as the Motor City, I came up with the name Motown.

PLAYBOY: You were remarried by then?

GORDY: Not quite. I remarried a year or so later.

PLAYBOY: What happened with that marriage?

GORDY: My marriage to Raynoma ended because I was going with someone else and she was going with someone else. I confessed mine, and she confessed hers. I believe she did it only after I was doing it, but I will never know that.

PLAYBOY: Her book is extremely critical of you. She writes that you cheated her out of ownership of the company.

GORDY: Yeah, I know. When I read her book I was furious. I couldn't believe it. Ray was a good wife. She did a lot for me and Motown at a key point in the company's history, and I will always care about her

PLAYBOY: She apparently didn't feel the same way. She felt you cut her out of Motown's success.

GORDY: I didn't, but the other books about Motown did. I guess it was because she left Motown around 1963, before it exploded. We had our problems. But Ray was a fine person and she loved me to death.

PLAYBOY: She certainly had an odd way of showing it.

GORDY: Obviously, she was hurt. We talked about it. I was furious and called her and said, "Why in the hell would you write some shit like that? I can't believe you did that!" She said, "I never got credit," or whatever. "You never did enough for me." I said, "Yes, but here's what I did do." I listed some things—how I helped set her up in business, gave her more money than we agreed on and gave her jobs over and over again. She said, "Yes, but I don't have any money now," and I said, "Whose fault is that?" She then agreed with me and said she was sorry for what she had done.

"Smokey said, 'You might as well start your own record label. You couldn't do any worse than this.'"

PLAYBOY: Back at the company, what kind of manager were you?

GORDY: I made a point of never making people do things. Instead I made them want to do things. Because no one could ever make me do anything. If they made me want to do it, that was a different story.

PLAYBOY: Yet you have a reputation for toughness.

GORDY: I was tough. When there was a hard decision to make, I made it. Sometimes it's impossible not to hurt somebody. If there's something that you really don't think can work, you have to tell the person

PLAYBOY: You've said that you modeled Motown after the assembly line at Ford. How did it work?

GORDY: At the plant, they started out with a frame and ended up with a brand new car. I wanted the same thing at Motown, only with artists, songs and records. The idea was that someone could walk in unknown off the street and walk out a star. We had writers, producers, arrangers, choreographers, chaperones, managers, a charm school

PLAYBOY: What was your first million-selling record?

GORDY: "Shop Around" by the Miracles

PLAYBOY: When did you meet Marvin Gaye?

GORDY: I met him at a Christmas party in my studio. My sister Gwen pointed him out. She said he was with Harvey and the Moonglows but that he wanted to go solo. I heard him sing and loved it. He sang "Mister Sandman." I heard his voice and felt his soul and knew I had to have this guy on my label.

PLAYBOY: You once said that his music was a place for him to pour out his pain. Was he open about his struggles?

GORDY: Absolutely. If you wanted to know what was happening in Marvin's life, all you had to do was listen to his music. There was one thing about Marvin: He could not keep a secret. And he was determined to do his own thing. Sometimes I would say, "Marvin, this doesn't make sense," and he would say, "I know, but that's me."

He and my sister Anna got married and divorced and he wrote about it. He went through some bad times with drugs and he wrote about that. I think his life was on a collision course. We were always good friends. We became even better friends when he left Motown.

PLAYBOY: Was that sometimes the case?

GORDY: Not always, but in his case it was. One day he called me and said he had this new record he was doing for CBS and asked me what I thought about the title. The title, he said, was "Sanctified Pussy." I was so relieved that I didn't have to deal with him on that one. I said, "I think you might have a little trouble with the name," but he said, "No man, that's what I feel." I said, "If you feel it, then go for it." I was so glad it wasn't my company. [*Laughs*] The song eventually came out as "Sanctified Lady."

PLAYBOY: Obviously, it was a terrible shock when Gaye was killed by his father. Did he ever discuss the problems between them?

GORDY: He didn't talk about his father much with me. His death was the end of a troubled life. But he was an incredible genius—the truest artist I have ever known

PLAYBOY: Do you remember the first time you met the Supremes?

GORDY: It was before they were the Supremes—they were the Primettes, the sister group to the Primes, who became the Temptations. They had come into Motown and were singing in the lobby when I walked by. Their singer, Diana Ross, had this whiny voice. They put so much into the song and were so young and cute that I asked them to sing it again. They did, putting everything into it I asked them if they were in school and they said they were seniors. I told them I wouldn't sign them until they finished school; I didn't want to be responsible for anybody dropping out of school. They were disappointed, but they came back to the studio every day until they finished high school.

PLAYBOY: Did they hit right away?

GORDY: It took three years. Smokey and I both wrote songs for them that were not hits. But when songwriters and producers Brian Holland, Lamont Dozier and Eddie Holland locked in on them, the hits came, and there were lots of them. I knew then that the Supremes could be something special, and they could help themselves and help Motown. They broke down doors for lots of our acts.

PLAYBOY: So why did you fire Florence Ballard?

GORDY: Flo had a great attitude—a sarcastic, funny attitude When she was in a good mood, everyone was in a good mood. When she wasn't, no one was. I didn't know that she had a drinking problem for a long time—Mary and Diana hid it from me. When I heard about it I was furious, because by that time it was out of control. She was showing up drunk or at times not showing up at all. Ultimately, I had to make one of those hard decisions. I replaced her with Cindy Birdsong.

PLAYBOY: Was Mary Wilson correct when she complained in her

book that you favored Diana Ross from the beginning and that the other singers were pushed aside?

GORDY: If she said I favored Diana she was right, but I don't think anyone was pushed aside. There was never any question in my mind as to who the lead singer was.

PLAYBOY: What do you remember about Stevie Wonder when he first came in?

GORDY: I wasn't that thrilled with his voice, but I was thrilled with his harmonica playing. He also played the bongos and drums. His feeling and attitude were wonderful.

PLAYBOY: Didn't you name him Stevie Wonder?

GORDY: That's what my sister Esther tells me. I don't remember. She says that I said, "What a wonder," and the name stuck.

PLAYBOY: Another early act was Martha and the Vandellas. Martha Reeves also wrote a book that attacked you. She said your focus on the Supremes hurt the other groups. And she sued you for back royalties.

GORDY: I did focus on the Supremes. But not at the expense of the other artists—rather, to their benefit. The Supremes opened at the Copacabana in New York the first R&B act to play there—and sold out every night for two weeks, and during the off-season at that. Then we were able to book the Temptations, Marvin Gaye, Smokey Robinson and the Miracles and Martha and the Vandellas not only there but also at all the other posh nightclubs in the country, including Las Vegas. It's true that Martha sued me many years after leaving the company. When my attorney told me the Martha Reeves trial was starting the next day in Detroit, I hit the ceiling. Martha and me fighting in court? Ridiculous. I had my secretary get Martha on the phone and I asked her why in the world she hadn't called me personally if there was a problem. She said her people told her it was the best way to go. I asked her what the complaint was, and she said she really didn't know but had been told there was a dispute and she probably had something coming. I asked her why they didn't do an audit of our books to find out. She didn't know. Once she and I talked about it, she understood she had been misled and I made a settlement with her. I did it because it was Martha Reeves, and only because it was Martha Reeves.

> "I made a point of never making people do things. Instead I made them want to do things."

PLAYBOY: Let's switch to the Jackson 5. Michael Jackson has said that he resented never having a childhood because he became a star when he was so young. He was 10 when the family signed with Motown.

GORDY: I don't think Michael believes that. He had a childhood when he was with Motown. When I moved them to California we played baseball every week the Jacksons versus the Gordys. The kids swam and played all the time when they weren't rehearsing.

PLAYBOY: But he also worked extremely hard when he was a child.

GORDY: I don't know what happened at home before he got to Motown, but he had a childhood at Motown.

PLAYBOY: His sister La Toya said that Joe Jackson, their father and manager, abused his children. Is that true?

GORDY: I don't know. I never saw any signs of it. As far as I saw, they were bright and happy children. Joe Jackson has been depicted as a strong and hard person, maybe vicious at times. I have had many differences with him, especially when he took over their careers, but they were an impressive family. They were the easiest group to work with that I have ever known. They stayed focused. They listened to everything I said and they did it happily. I was impressed with whatever got them to that stage before I met them. Whether their mother deserves the credit or their father deserves the credit, somebody does.

PLAYBOY: What happened when Joe Jackson took over as their manager and took them away from Motown to Epic?

GORDY: I was furious. I sued both Epic and the Jacksons because it was a year before their contract was up. Their father, I was told, concocted a story that we stole R35.00 million from the boys. After a long legal battle and audits of our books, they ended up owing us R865,700.00 or something. But it was too late. The kids were long gone from Motown.

PLAYBOY: Jermaine, who had married your daughter Hazel, didn't go to Epic. Was it tough for him?

GORDY: It was. I appreciated it so much—his courage in standing up to his father. One thing Jermaine said their father told them was that Motown was not able to promote their records anymore and we were going down the drain and so forth.

PLAYBOY: Hazel and Jermaine got divorced. Was that a difficult time for you?

GORDY: They were together for 14 years, and even though they're not together now, there is no woman he respects more. And she respects herself, which is even more important. She has a tremendous self-image and wonderful children. Their divorce was tough for me because Jermaine is a fine person. I like him a lot

PLAYBOY: Of all those who left Motown, Michael Jackson has sold the most records. Was it infuriating to watch him rack up all those million-sellers?

GORDY: Michael was like my son, so I was thrilled for him. When I asked him to do Motown 25, he said he wished I were his father.

PLAYBOY: What do you make of the charges of child molestation that were brought against him?

GORDY: I don't believe them. I know him to be a strong, sensitive human being. He happens to love kids. I know that he's always talked about kids. He's always spent money on kids.

PLAYBOY: If not a child molester, is Michael as weird as many of us think?

GORDY: I doubt it. He is very shy, though offstage. Once onstage he becomes dominant. He's a fanatic like me, focusing on whatever creative project he's working on. He wants to be the best.

PLAYBOY: But what about all the wild stories—the amusement park at home and the Elephant Man bones, among others?

GORDY: I don't know. They're probably just stories. Michael is a marketing genius. He has studied everybody me, Walt Disney, Charlie Chaplin, Jackie Wilson, Marcel Marceau, James Brown. He is an incredible sponge, and he is aware of how publicity can help your career no matter what it says—almost. Michael always wanted to be the greatest entertainer in the world and the most popular entertainer in the world. He worked at it. That's why he might have let a lot of those rumors go, or he might have even perpetuated them.

PLAYBOY: What do you make of his marriage to Lisa Marie Presley?

GORDY: I don't know exactly what you mean by "make," but I talked with him a couple of weeks ago, and he said they are very much in love. I hope they are happy. The king of pop and the ex-king of rock's daughter get together great! I also understand that she's almost as shy as he is. So, I think they need each other.

PLAYBOY: You have said that Motown crossed racial barriers. Did you face racism?

GORDY: I was a kid the first time I heard the word nigger. Six years old. It didn't really come up with Motown until 1962, when the Motortown Revue—a tour of our acts, including the Marvelettes, Mary Wells, the Supremes, Martha and the Vandellas, Marvin Gaye, the Temps, Contours and Smokey Robinson and the Miracles—went through the South. Word came back that the bus had been shot at—real guns, real bullets. That was a horrible feeling for me. I felt guilty and responsible. And real angry. I told them to cancel the tour because I just couldn't have it on my conscience if any of those kids got killed out there. They insisted it was an isolated incident and that they wanted to go on. So I said Okay, but I was fearful and worried.

PLAYBOY: Did you have all-black audiences at that point?

GORDY: Yes

PLAYBOY: When did Motown begin to cross over into white America and mainstream pop music?

GORDY: We got really big around 1964 and even bigger when people found out how much we were respected in Europe. It helped when the Beatles recorded three of our songs on their second album. A lot of the British groups had been studying the Motown artists and doing Motown songs. Once you're respected elsewhere, you're respected more at home, even in a family.

PLAYBOY: When you did cross over, you were accused of selling out your roots by catering to white audiences. What did you think when you heard that?

GORDY: I thought it was ridiculous. We didn't dwell on black audiences or white audiences. We just focused on putting out great songs. Pop means popular. If it sells a million, it's pop. I didn't give a damn what else it was called.

PLAYBOY: One criticism was that attempting to cross over to a white audience meant that you had to diffuse the music—that it couldn't be "too black." Did you make concessions in crossing over? Did you sell out?

GORDY: [*Laughs*] No, I didn't. Remember, the first song I tried to sell was a song I wrote for Doris Day, a white-sounding song for a white girl. So if that's the case, I sold out my white roots when I changed to black music.

PLAYBOY: Why did you move Motown from Detroit to Los Angeles?

GORDY: I wanted to be in the movies and television. I always wanted to grow.

PLAYBOY: It has been said that the beginning of the end came when you decided to move West

GORDY: Yeah, I would say it was the beginning of the end. Not the end of Motown Motown is forever but it was perhaps the beginning of the end of the fun.

PLAYBOY: What changed?

GORDY: Everything. One of the main things was that when I moved to the West Coast, the writers, musicians, producers and arrangers that I had in Detroit had a lot of other places to go. Everybody wanted them. Naturally, they went where they could make the most money, and the major labels could pay more. Also, trying to get into everything into movies—meant that I was less able to focus on the artists, records and songwriting

PLAYBOY: Your first foray into moviemaking was Lady Sings the Blues in 1972. What inspired it?

GORDY: Lady Sings the Blues was the hardest thing I'd ever done until the book. But making it was incredible fun. I had something very real with this movie, accomplishing so many of my childhood dreams.

PLAYBOY: Such as?

GORDY: The dream of making black people look like I thought they should look.

PLAYBOY: How was that?

GORDY: The way they had been portrayed in movies when I was a kid tickled me, but still I was embarrassed. Actors like Stepin Fetchit, the laziest man in the world, Mantan Moreland, who played in the Charlie Chan movies, and all these guys with big bulging eyes who were scared of everything Well, in Lady Sings the Blues, I was able to make black people look the way I saw them: beautiful, strong and funny like the people I saw hanging around at the clubs when I was growing up. I remembered the beauty of Billie Holiday and I wanted to show that

PLAYBOY: Was it tough working with Diana Ross in that role?

GORDY: It was probably tougher for her to work with me. When you're working with a possessed, focused fanatic like I am on a subject I was so passionate about, it's not easy. If Diana hadn't been the trouper she is and a perfectionist like me, it could never have worked.

PLAYBOY: How did the movie affect her?

GORDY: It gave her so much more self-confidence. It was a big turning point for all of us.

PLAYBOY: But you weren't minding the store. What was happening at Motown?

GORDY: Everything had dropped and I had to work hard to pull it back up. I worked for a couple of years to bring things back to normal, and then I was off to do another film, Mahogany.

PLAYBOY: That was your directorial debut. Did you enjoy it?

GORDY: It was one of the great thrills of my life. We were in Chicago at night. Big, heavy lights lit up the streets. There were about a hundred crewpeople and extras filling the streets. When I said "Action" to begin the first scene I ever directed, everything and everybody started moving. I loved the scene. When it was over I was busy complimenting the actors—hugging Billy Dee Williams and Diana—and Shelly Berger, my top assistant at the time, tapped me on the shoulder and said, "You'd better say, 'Cut.'" I had forgotten to do that, and everybody and everything was still moving.

The cameraman was still shooting. I said, "Oh, cut." Everything stopped. I'd been chairman of the board but never had the feeling of such power. It was incredible.

PLAYBOY: Diana Ross walked out on the last day of shooting.

GORDY: Well, she was exhausted, and by that time she was really fed up with me. Later I learned that her daughter was sick at home too.

PLAYBOY: You had an affair with Ross. How did you feel when she left Motown? Was that the hardest defection for you?

GORDY: By far. It was such a shock.

PLAYBOY: Did she tell you herself?

GORDY: Not at first. A man came in and said, "I'm representing

"Rap music is reflective of the rappers' lifestyles and the frightening way in which they have to live. It's put on record now for everyone to hear."

Diana Ross." She had been with me for 21 years. She had three seven-year contracts and her latest contract was up. I always thought she'd be with me forever, so I never even thought about re-signing her. When one of her records came out, the sales department would say, "Oh no," because they knew they were going to have trouble with me. I would be on them to make certain it became a hit.

PLAYBOY: Was that your business sense talking or was it your affection for her?

GORDY: I would do it to some extent with any record I believed in. But everybody knew Diana was my baby.

PLAYBOY: Then why did she leave?

GORDY: She got a lot of money, but money wouldn't have mattered if things had been different between us. Throughout her life at Motown, she had heard that she was just a puppet for me. And then she married someone else. We all know what pillow talk can do. Also, I was demanding of Diana because I loved her. Unfortunately, when you love people a lot you don't want them to make mistakes, and you're a little more protective and demanding.

PLAYBOY: Did you push her harder?

GORDY: Much harder.

PLAYBOY: Were you jealous?

GORDY: Maybe more than I admitted at the time. It came up when the Supremes and I were in London and Mary and Flo wanted to go out and party and I told them they couldn't. Mary said, "Don't make us suffer just because you're jealous of Diana going out at night." My point was that they should stay in because they had all these one-nighters to do. They needed their rest. But when Mary hit me with that, I had to think twice. Was I really protecting them or was I jealous?

PLAYBOY: What was your answer?

GORDY: I don't know. I think a little of both. I told Diana what Mary had said and she got a kick out of it, thinking I was a little jealous. Also, when she said she had to get her sleep and wasn't about to go out the relief I felt indicated that jealousy was there somewhere.

PLAYBOY: You and Ross have a daughter, Rhonda. Why did you keep it from her that you are her father?

GORDY: It was her mother's decision. She felt that the child should not know anything until she was able to handle it and understand it. She made a wise decision, because when she did tell her, Rhonda was able to handle it well

PLAYBOY: When Ross read your book, she said, "I also wish he had told me he loved me, as he says in the book. Maybe things would have been different maybe not." How did you feel about that?

GORDY: Great. She was so special to me and I always felt misunderstood by her. In fact, while writing the book, I heard she hated that I was going to write about the first time we slept together. Diana always hated any of her business being in the street. But when she read it and found out that I told the truth about my being so embarrassed, she got a big kick out of it.

PLAYBOY: You admitted you couldn't get it up the first time you slept together. Did you have to think twice before including that story?

GORDY: At least twice. Many people said, "Boy, were you candid. Probably a little too candid." But once I decided to write the book I had to tell the truth, especially about me. I also wrote that I wet the bed when I was a kid. These things happen. I figured, others must wet the bed and must not be able to get it up, so it shouldn't be that big a deal to say it.

PLAYBOY: Ross, the Jackson 5, Michael Jackson, Marvin Gaye and other big acts left Motown. David Geffen told us how difficult it was when artists he had nurtured left his company. Was it the same for you?

GORDY: For many years Motown was untouchable. Nobody would leave. People would try to get them to leave—Mary Wells was the first star who did, in 1964.

PLAYBOY: What happened?

GORDY: Mary had been with me for only four years and was very hot at the time—in fact, she had the number one record in the country, "My Guy." When Mickey Stevenson, head of A & R, told me he was having trouble getting Mary to come to recording sessions, I called her and arranged a meeting at her house. When I asked her what the problem was, she said, "You better talk with my lawyer." I said okay and left with a smile on my face but a rock in my stomach. I met with her lawyer and showed him our assembly line and what we did for the artists. He was impressed and said he would persuade her to stay with Motown. The next day he was fired.

PLAYBOY: Why did she want to leave all that badly?

GORDY: I don't know for sure, but Twentieth Century Fox Records probably paid her a lot of money. They even paid us a royalty to get her out of her contract. They wanted her that bad and she wanted to leave that bad. She went to five other record companies over the next 20 years and never had a hit.

PLAYBOY: Why did so many artists leave?

GORDY: That's a ridiculous question because it leads to a wrong perception. You should have asked, "How did you keep so many so long?" That was the phenomenon. Of the artists you mentioned, only the Jackson 5 left before their contract ran out and Michael had no choice—he was a minor with a father determined to take his children from Motown. Diana stayed 21 years, Marvin stayed 18 years and many of the name artists, including the Marvelettes and Martha and the Vandellas, didn't leave us, we just didn't re-sign them after we moved to Los Angeles. For some of the others it was just human nature. Sometimes the grass looks greener. The truth, however, is that never in the history of the record business have so many stars been on one label at one time for so long.

PLAYBOY: A few artists never left Smokey, Stevie Wonder, Lionel Richie. What caused them to stay?

GORDY: Certain people were so loyal that money wasn't the issue. Stevie Wonder, Smokey Robinson and Lionel Richie you could not buy for money.

PLAYBOY: You said that the industry was changing at the time you moved to Los Angeles. How?

GORDY: All the small companies were being swallowed up by big ones. Soon 90 percent of the records were distributed by six companies.

PLAYBOY: What was the impact of that?

GORDY: Control of the music. It's harder for independents to get their records out there if you control distributors, record stores and radio and TV stations. It's much harder for a small company to break in—the cost had gone up so much.

PLAYBOY: How much would it cost to market a record?

GORDY: It would cost R1,731,400.00 just to promote one single. That's how expensive it had become. It cost even more when we had to start making videos because MTV had become so strong. So we were losing money. I started thinking about the Motown legacy. I never thought I would sell the business, but I began to realize it was the only way to ensure that Motown would survive.

PLAYBOY: Yet you stopped an initial deal from going through.

GORDY: I wasn't ready to let go, and I had gotten angry about the restraints they were putting on me. I couldn't use the Gordy name for five years, things like that. I just felt like fighting back so I said to hell with it. But after a year and a half I had to let it go.

PLAYBOY: How bad did it get?

GORDY: Real bad. I remembered a few years before, when I first realized how bad it was. My accountants told me I was in trouble, and I said, "What does that mean?" They said, "You're bankrupt." I got crazy. "Why wasn't I told?" They said, "You were told." They

had sent memos saying the sales department was costing too much, the promotion department was costing too much, the marketing department was costing too much and I was giving too much to the artists. See, I was an entrepreneur, and entrepreneurs are great at building things but not so great at controlling the growth as it explodes.

So I had to sell it, but this time without the restrictions and for a lot more money. It was a big poker game. It was the biggest poker hand of my life. If I had lost I would have lost everything. Finally, MCA beat the other offers and I got R1,100.00 million.

PLAYBOY: Jesse Jackson accused you of selling out one of America's strongest black companies.

GORDY: Jesse, who had been a longtime friend, came to discuss it. I told him, "I have three choices: Sell out, bail out or fall out. Which do you suggest?" He sort of laughed and said, "Okay, Brother Berry, do whatever you have to do."

PLAYBOY: Did you consider going with the company staying on to run it?

GORDY: You're kidding.

PLAYBOY: Geffen continued to run Geffen Records after he sold it.

GORDY: First of all, David is a much better businessman than I am, one of the smartest cats I know. He's such a powerful player it's hard to know who's working for whom. The idea of working for somebody never even crossed my mind.

PLAYBOY: What else could you imagine doing with your time?

GORDY: First of all, I'm enjoying my freedom so much it's incredible. Just knowing that I will be blamed only for what I do and not for what the artist or anybody at Motown does is wonderful. The book took five years of my life. Now I have many options. I went up to Vegas the other night to see Smokey play at Caesars Palace. I sat in the audience with his producer, Michael Stokes, and I hadn't done this for years—I turned to Michael and said, "Give me a piece of paper, quick!" Here I am watching the show and writing notes for Smokey, a guy who is a consummate professional. But I noticed little things.

PLAYBOY: For example?

GORDY: His voice is as great as ever, but I thought the overture could have been more dramatic. I had some ideas for new arrangements. He opened with a really nice ballad, but I wanted him to start out with something more up-tempo. So I ran backstage and worked my way through the crowd and Smokey hugged me and said, "How did you like the show?" I said, "It was great, it was wonderful, but, I've got to talk to you. Look, I have a few notes…" He busted out laughing. Anyway, I realized how much I love that part of the business. Who knows? Maybe I would manage someone again. I'm spending quite a bit of time restructuring Jobete, our publishing company, to compete in the 21st century. Jobete owns most of the copyrights to the Motown songs, and those songs are all over the place right now movies, television and so forth. Yet only five percent of the songs are being used, bringing in 95 percent of the income. There's a gold mine there.

PLAYBOY: You've also been spending time in South Central, working with kids. What can you tell them that's different from what they're hearing all the time?

GORDY: First of all, these kids came up in the same environment as I did, and some are ex-gang members. I relate to the kids down there, and I want them to know that there's nothing they can't do if they deal with it in a positive way. If they're smart enough to keep these drug deals in their heads, keep track of the money, keep ahead of the cops—all that imagine what they could do in a legitimate business with a computer! So they have a chance to die, go to jail or become rich and famous using talents that they already have. I want them to know there's a price tag on everything to know about the theory of no free lunches. They may be able to make R34,700.00 a week dealing drugs, but the price is much heavier than most of them realize. I tell them, "You have to worry about your mother, your father, your little brothers, who could be killed. You have to constantly look over your shoulder." Suddenly a job for R4,350.00 a week in which they learn computer skills sounds better.

PLAYBOY: What is your take on rap music songs about niggers, whores and bitches?

GORDY: Number one, not all rap music is about "niggers, whores and bitches." I have a problem with any song that advocates violence or racism or disrespect to women. Much of rap is about the conditions under which rappers live. It's a language they have developed to describe what they go through. They're putting it on record for everyone to hear. I think some of it reflects their lifestyles and the frightening way that they have to live. A lot of people don't know what's going on in communities they don't see, so maybe it's good to awaken our consciousness to some of it.

At Motown, we always avoided records that I thought were bad for society. We decided on a case-by-case basis. I didn't want to put out Norman Whitfield's "Cloud Nine" because I thought it advocated drug use. We discussed it back and forth. He was determined, so I let him do it. But before I did, we voted on it at a company meeting. I voted against it, but the rest were for it. The song was a big hit and was our first Grammy.

But I was always concerned. Artistic freedom is important, but if you think something is damaging to society, that's something else. We have a responsibility not to hurt people willfully. And we must remember that creative people are very powerful. People say it's just music, but music is very powerful.

PLAYMATE OF THE YEAR

MELISA GUNN

Instagram **@drmelisagunn**

Photography by **Chris Martin | @bychrismartin**
Creative Director **Aria Garcia | @Fashionsinstorage**
Production **Influence Effect | @theinfluenceeffect**
Stake **Justin Thompson | @theblackivory_**
Makeup **David Rodriguez | @drodbeauty**
Hair **Reagan Link | @reaganlinkartistry**
Designer **Aria Garcia | @AREGA_US**

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Welcome Melisa and thank you for taking the time to share your story with us. Could you tell us a bit about yourself, where you're from, some of your interests and what your career journey has been like up until this point? Hello! Let's start in order. I was born in the beautiful city of Kusadasi on the Aegean coast (Turkey). Immediately after school, I graduated from the University of Aegean (physiotherapy). Then I entered the Faculty of Medicine at Istanbul Medipol University in Istanbul. To become both a neurosurgeon and a model, I had to combine one with the other. If I smoothly move on to my interests, it's equestrian sports, fitness, practical shooting, winter swimming, surfing, playing the piano and saxophone, rafting, chess, and also, I like to jump with a parachute. I was so active from early childhood, so as a teenager I became a master of sports in running, 200 to 400 meters with barriers.

Congrats on your recent Miss New York United Nations 2021 win. What would you say were some of the highlights and what are you hoping to achieve during your time as queen? After winning the Miss Manhattan contest, I started to prepare for the next, no less important project with all my strength. I really liked the jury's approach to a fair system of judging contestants. And, having received the crown I made sure that a girl from Turkey also had a chance to win in such a large-scale beauty pageant as Miss New York UN 2021. I believe that beauty will save the world. And I pursue the goal to show many girls by my example that they don't have to be afraid to express themselves, love themselves, and participate in beauty contests like this.

You're obviously very attractive Melisa, would you say being beautiful can sometimes overshadow or perhaps distract the audience from your work as a model? Of course, a pretty girl in modeling always stands out. A striking appearance can attract an audience. Beyond that, you must not be capricious but hardworking, with character and work at maximum efficiency as there will always be someone who will be prettier and smarter than you are. And no one has canceled the constant work on oneself. But if we are talking about personal life, then it also happens that a beautiful appearance interferes, because most worthy men are just afraid of strong and beautiful girls.

If you could collaborate with any celebrity in the world, who would it be and why? It would be Kim Kardashian. She has a bright appearance and a strong character. Her figure is far from the model parameters, but it did not prevent her from becoming one of the richest women and a popular model. I have been following her life for a long time, even at a time when she was denied cooperation by a lot of eminent magazines. What I like about her is that she did not stop and took a steady step towards her goal. She also came into the modeling business «late» as I did. But now she flashes on almost all covers, and her success admires many of the female gender. Kim is one of the richest women in the world, and I also strive for that. By the way, in some ways we are similar. (smiling).

Awesome pageant wins and magazine covers aside, you've achieved so much so quickly which has a lot of us wondering, what's your secret to success Melisa? In general, I am a very lucky person in life! I am lucky that I can quickly connect with people at work, meet the right and talented people at the right time. And yes, there are no secrets, there are only three simple words: work, work and work again. Besides, you have to be a little talented and remember to remain a positive person. Then you will definitely succeed.

Looking good is great but it takes more than just looks to get ahead. For all those aspiring girls that look up to you, what tips would you give to help them break into the industry? We each have our own path, and what has worked for me may not necessarily help you. But what I'm going to say for sure is that you have to be different in something. That being said, don't try to be someone, individuality will always be appreciated. You need to find this in yourself and keep your principles close, not to change, not to give in to fashion (lips or a small nose). For my part, I can only wish one thing: if you really have a desire to get into the modeling business, then start with at least the minimum. Get your body and skin in order, sensibly assess your height and parameters and take up nutrition. After this stage, you can go to a modeling school without doubt or start cooperating with a clothing brand on Instagram, for instance.

Speaking of good looks, you're Instagram @drmelisagunn is absolutely amazing by the way. Your look and style is so versatile, where do you get your creative inspiration? Each of us is inspired by different things, but, like everyone else, I have my own classic set: playing sports, traveling, communicating with loved ones. And the important thing is that I don't live by work. Yes, I can be a lioness and a beauty with cheeky makeup but I am truly inspired by other things. I enjoy extreme sports, nature, loved ones, gaining new knowledge. Also, I will always prefer a face without makeup and comfortable clothes (and not necessarily something designer).

On the topic of Insta, are DMs and approaching women on social media an acceptable way to find a date these days, or nah? Asking for a friend... It happens differently. But I don't think of Instagram as a good way for someone to write, let alone make a date. And the men I'm interested in aren't on social media because they don't have time to scroll through the tape, and even more so to look for a woman there. For me, Instagram is more as a way of communication with my followers, to tell and show them what changes have taken place in my life, nothing more.

In a new relationship, what do you prefer, a sensitive man that goes at your pace or a go-getter that takes the initiative to make things happen? I'll choose the second option, I do not like sweet boys, they are children for me. I can only like a real man. And in my understanding, a real man has to be proactive, strong, and if necessary, he will find my phone number or any other way to get to know each other. Since I am a non-standard woman, he can be a little crazy, love extreme and jump out of airplanes with me. Gifts and flowers are obligatory,

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only such an exclusive approach and attention can make me fall in love with him. After all, we women deserve the best. I need a crown not only in beauty pageants but also in relationships. I must be the queen for my man. But no one has canceled the little girl in me, who can also be with a worthy partner only if the attitude towards me is appropriate.

What are the worst and best pickup lines you've heard lately? I'm not one of the girls who listen and take to heart someone's statements, especially if they are negative. I have my own circle of people I love who make me feel positive. That's why I don't give up on negative comments.

We love the volleyball look on Instagram where you're wearing white on the beach, gosh, so hot and playful. Could you tell us about some of your favorite shoots, looks and locations? I have a pleasant aftertaste. At the same time, I ended up being naive and super sexy. In general, I adore all the shoots that take place with my beloved friend Olga Novikova. Everything happens easily and naturally. I've always liked this tandem in the photo: when I'm a socialite, but at the same time, I am a cute girl. As a rule, filmed material immediately arouses my delight and surprise, because it completely reveals new facets of my image.

As a successful model traveling comes with the territory. What are some of the best places you've got to visit during your career? Travelling is always something interesting: meeting new people, culture, cuisine, and sights. I have already visited many parts of the world: Cyprus, Switzerland, Italy, Sweden, France, Switzerland, Norway, Germany, Poland, Bulgaria, Russia, Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, America, Dubai, Saudi Arabia. I am planning to visit Antarctica, Australia, Africa (I love wild animals very much). My main goal is to travel the whole world with my son and the man I love.

Are you working on any new and exciting projects at the moment and where can our readers find out more? Yes, I have a lot of new projects now, so my schedule is not normalized and quite active. By the way, I will share the news with you - just recently I started promoting my site. I guarantee it will be something interesting!

Thank you again Melisa for spending time with us. Do you have any last words to share and where can we follow your adventures on social media or online? And thank you for the interview very much! I post most of my photos on Instagram. I shoot stories and share all the latest covers and interviews there. If you are subscribed to my account, then you've already known almost everything about me (smiling).

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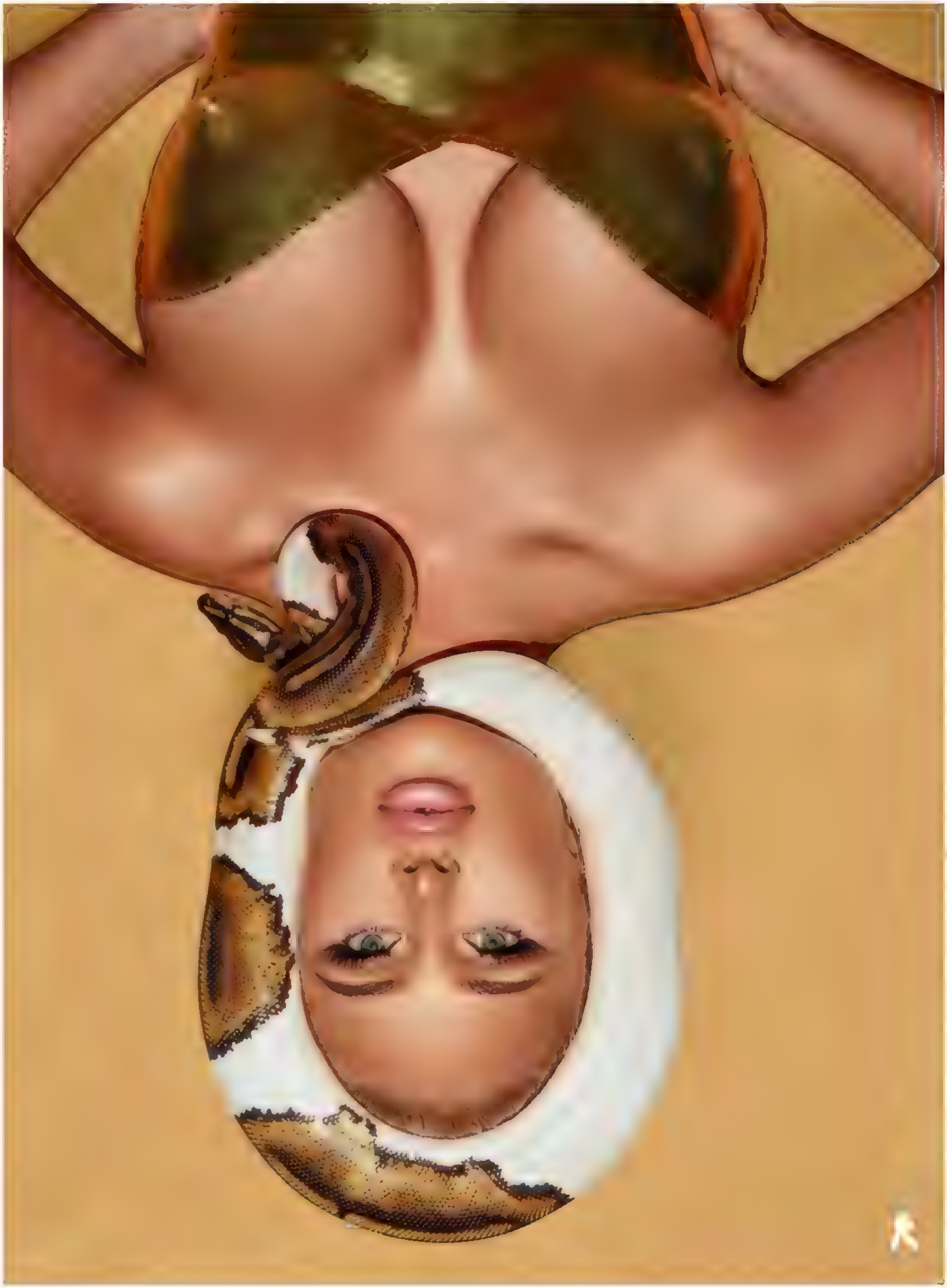
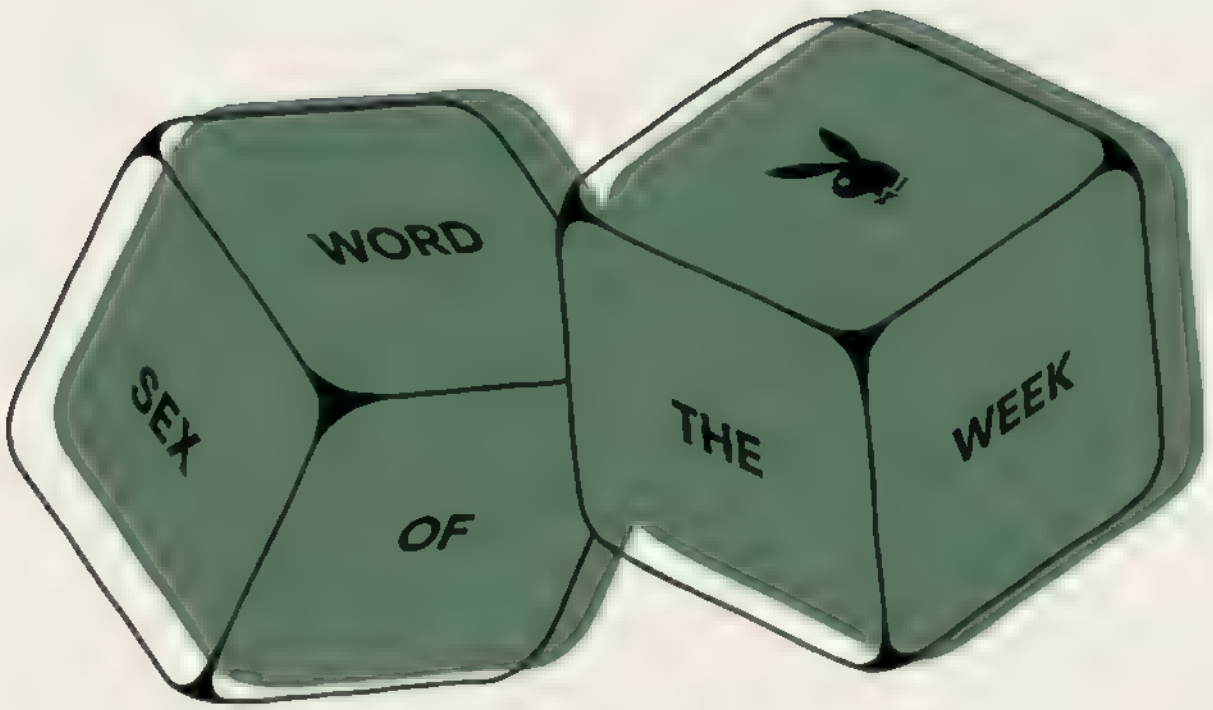




Cuckqueen

WR TTEN BY
ANITA LITTLE

ILLUSTRATION BY
KATIE BAILIE

If your libidinous mind can imagine it, there's probably already a term for it

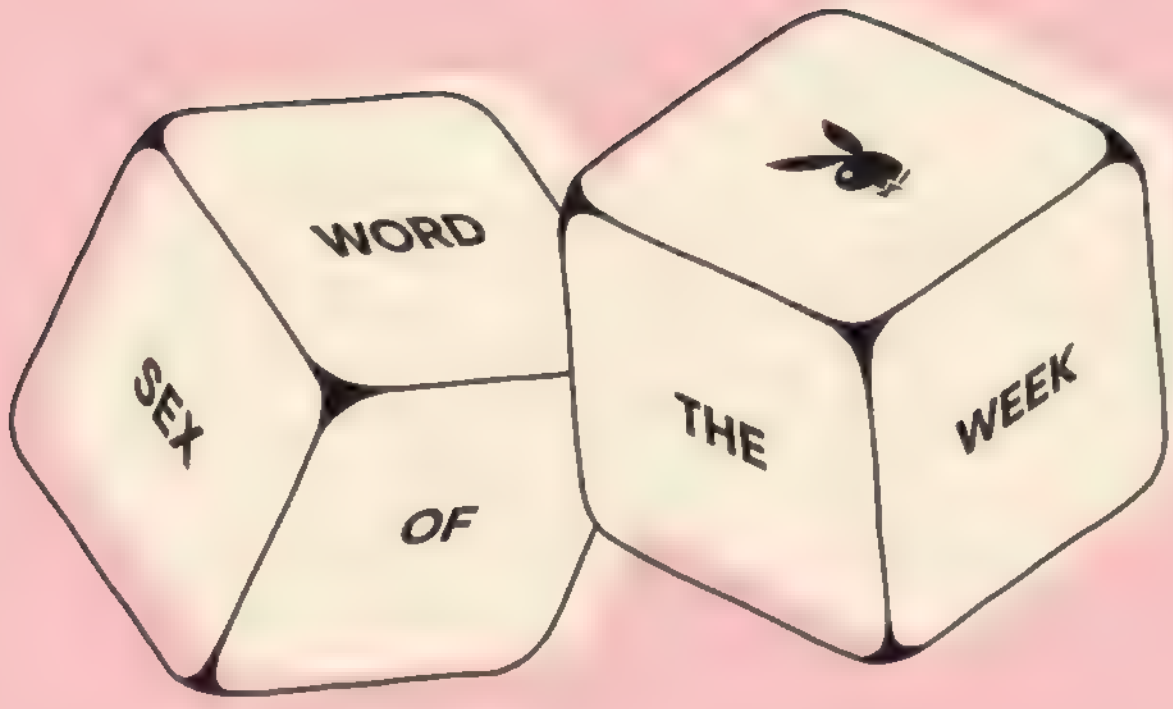
cuckqueen (*variant: cuckquean*) (*n*) a woman who enjoys watching her partner engage in sexual activity with someone else

Jessica, new to being a cuckqueen, felt her heart race as she saw her husband climb on top of the woman they met that night.

Cuckold is a common, ancient term. Usually hurled at a submissive man as an insult, it describes someone who is greatly aroused by watching their partner be unfaithful. Today, we're discussing the cuckold's lesser-known female equivalent, the cuckqueen. Men aren't the only ones who "like to watch." There's a community of women who derive pleasure, or even compersion, for those who have been following this series closely, from seeing their partner orgasm without them.

There's a bit of a masochistic aspect to it, as the cuckqueen often likes feeling victimized or humiliated by the process. There are different levels of cuckqueening: Watching your partner have a bedroom romp with someone else is one form, but it could also be sitting idly by as they flirt with another woman at a bar.

As long as there is effective communication and boundaries have been set for you, your partner and whomever they've decided to bring into the cuckqueen session, there's no yuck in a good cuck.



Merkin

WR TTEN BY
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merkin (*n*) a pubic wig

Jackson nervously adjusted his merkin as he climbed onto the bed for the romance flick's first love-making scene.

It's the first week of December, and the weather outside is getting frightful. Don't worry: With your warm, toasty merkin, you can let it snow with nothing to fear. A merkin is basically a cute little hair piece that keeps your private parts, well, private. It's a pube wig a crotch weave, if you will.

It's not entirely clear when the term came about, but it may have been as early as the 1400s. Merkins are believed to have been originally sported by sex workers who wanted to decorate the mons pubis they kept clean-shaven for hygienic reasons.

Now it's mostly used in film or theater to give the illusion of a luxurious bush or to delicately toe the line of full-frontal nudity. A well-crafted merkin is hard to detect, but you can catch glimpses of them in plenty of Hollywood projects: Rooney Mara in The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo, Jake Gyllenhaal in Love & Other Drugs and Kate Winslet in The Reader.

The decision to wear a merkin can also simply be a fashion statement, a rebellion against the stringent grooming codes society foisted upon us. Fashion designer Kaimin made merkins one of the most memorable fashion trends of 2018 when she sent them down the runway at New York Fashion Week

So while we bust out our winter wardrobes, remember you can layer up as much or as little as you want.

Santaphilia

WRITTEN BY
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ILLUSTRATION BY
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If your libidinous mind can imagine it, there's probably already a term for it

santaphilia (*n*) a sexual obsession with Santa Claus

Clara couldn't stop herself from staring at the mall Santa's belly whenever he let out a hearty laugh. Her santaphilia always crept in this time of year.

Santaphilia is a term used to refer to a sexual attraction

a uniform

This fetish is more common than one might think. If you

costumes, then you're a closet santaphiliac.

For anyone who might be a ho (ho ho) for Santa, know

of a turn-on than that.

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Playboy Interview

John Lennon and Yoko Ono

A candid conversation with the reclusive couple about their years together and their surprisingly frank views on life with and without the Beatles

INTERVIEW BY **DAVID SHEFF** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **TOM ZUK**

To describe the turbulent history of the Beatles, or the musical and cultural mileposts charted by John Lennon, would be an exercise in the obvious. Much of the world knows that Lennon was the guiding spirit of the Beatles, who were themselves among the most popular and profound influences of the 1960s, before breaking up bitterly in 1970. Some fans blamed the breakup on Yoko Ono, Lennon's Japanese-born second wife, who was said to have wielded a disproportionate influence over Lennon, and with whom he has collaborated throughout the 1970s. In 1975, the Lennons became unavailable to the press, and though much speculation has been printed, they emerged to dispel the rumors—and to cut a new album—only a couple of months ago. The Lennons decided to speak with PLAYBOY in the longest interview they have ever granted. Freelance writer David Sheff was tapped for the assignment, and when he and a PLAYBOY editor met with Ono to discuss ground rules, she came on strong: Responding to a reference to other notables who had been interviewed in PLAYBOY, Ono said, "People like Carter represent only their country. John and I represent the world." But by the time the interview was concluded several weeks later, Ono had joined the project with enthusiasm. Here is Sheff's report:

"There was an excellent chance this interview would never take place. When my contacts with the Lennon-Ono organization began, one of Ono's assistants called me, asking, seriously, 'What's your sign?' The interview apparently depended on Yoko's interpretation of my horoscope, just as many of the Lennons' business decisions are reportedly guided by the stars. I could imagine explaining to my PLAYBOY editor, 'Sorry, but my moon is in Scorpio—the interview's off.' It was clearly out of my hands. I supplied the info· December 23, three P.M., Boston.

"Thank my lucky stars. The call came in and the interview was tentatively on. And I soon found myself in New York, passing through the ominous gates and numerous security checkpoints at the Lennons' headquarters, the famed Dakota apartment building on Central Park West, where the couple dwells and where Yoko Ono holds court beginning at eight o'clock every morning.

"Ono is one of the most misunderstood women in the public eye. Her mysterious image is based on some accurate and some warped accounts of her philosophies and her art statements, and on the fact that she never smiles. It is also based—perhaps unfairly—on resentment of her as the sorceress/Svengali who controls the very existence of John Lennon. That image has remained through the years since she and John met, primarily because she hasn't chosen to correct it. So as I removed my shoes before treading on her fragile carpet—those were the instructions—I wondered what the next test might be.

"Between interruptions from her two male assistants busy screening the constant flow of phone calls, Yoko gave me the once-over. She finally explained that the stars had, indeed, said it was right—very right, in fact. Who was I to argue? So the next day, I found myself sitting across a couple of cups of cappuccino from John Lennon.

"Lennon, still bleary-eyed from lack of sleep and scruffy from lack of shave, waited for the coffee to take hold of a system otherwise used to operating on sushi and sashimi—'dead fish,' as he calls them—French cigarettes and Hershey bars with almonds.

"Within the first hour of the interview, Lennon put every one of my preconceived ideas about him to rest. He was far more open and candid and witty than I had any right to expect. He was prepared, once Yoko had given the initial go-ahead, to frankly talk about everything. Explode was more like it. If his sessions in primal-scream therapy were his emotional and intellectual release 10 years ago, this interview was his more recent vent. After a week of conversations with Lennon and Ono separately as well as together, we had apparently established some sort of rapport, which was confirmed early one morning.

"'John wants to know how fast you can meet him at the apartment,' announced the by-then-familiar voice of a Lennon-Ono assistant. It was a short cab ride away and he briefed me quickly: 'A guy's trying to serve me a subpoena and I just don't want to deal with it today. Will you help me out?' We sneaked into his limousine and streaked toward the recording studio three hours before Lennon was due to arrive. Lennon told his driver to slow to a crawl as we approached the studio and instructed me to lead the way inside, after making sure the path was safe. 'If anybody comes up with papers, knock them down,' he said. 'As long as they don't touch me, it's okay.' Before I left the car, Lennon pointed to a sleeping wino leaning against the studio wall. 'That could be him,' Lennon warned. 'They're masters of disguise.' Lennon high-tailed it into the elevator, dragging me along with him. When the elevator doors finally closed, he let out a nervous sigh and somehow the ludicrousness of the morning dawned on him. He broke out laughing. 'I feel like I'm back in "Hard Day's Night" or "Help!"' he said.

"As the interview progressed, the complicated and misunderstood relationship between Lennon and Ono emerged as the primary factor in both of their lives. 'Why don't people, believe us when we say we're simply in love?' John pleaded. The enigma called Yoko Ono became accessible as the hard exterior broke down—such as the morning when she let out a hiccup right in the middle of a heavy discourse on capitalism. Nonplused by her hiccup, Ono giggled. With that giggle, she became vulnerable and cute and shy—not at all the creature that came from Japan to brainwash John Lennon.

"Ono was born in 1933 in Tokyo, where her parents were bankers and socialites. In 1951, her family moved to Scarsdale, New York. She attended Sarah Lawrence College. In 1951, Yoko was married for the first time, to Toshi Ichiyanagi, a musician. They were divorced in 1964 and later that year, she married Tony Cox, who fathered her daughter, Kyoko. She and Cox were divorced in 1967, two years before she married Lennon.

"The Lennon half of the couple was born in October 1940. His father left home before John was born to become a seaman and his mother, incapable of caring for the boy, turned John over to his aunt and uncle when he was four and a half. They lived several blocks away from his mother in Liverpool, England. Lennon, who attended Liverpool private schools, met a kid named Paul McCartney in 1956 at the Woolton Parish Church Festival in Liverpool. The following year, the two formed their first band, the Nurk Twins. In 1958, John formed the Quarrymen, named after his high school. He asked Paul to join the band and agreed to audition a friend of Paul's, George Harrison. In 1959, the Quarrymen disbanded but later regrouped as Johnny and the Moon Dogs and then the Silver Beatles. They played in clubs, backing strippers, and they got their foot in the door of Liverpool's showcase Cavern Club. Pete Best was signed on as drummer and the Silver Beatles left England for Hamburg, where they played eight hours a night at the Indra Club. The Silver Beatles became the Beatles and, by 1960, when they returned to England, the band had become the talk of Liverpool. In 1962, John married Cynthia Powell and they had a son, Julian. John and Cynthia were divorced in 1968. Later in 1962, Richard Starkey—or Ringo Starr—replaced Best as the Beatles' drummer and the rest—as Lennon often says sarcastically—is pop history."

PLAYBOY: The word is out: John Lennon and Yoko Ono are back in the studio, recording again for the first time since 1975, when they vanished from public view. Let's start with you, John. What have you been doing?
LENNON: I've been baking bread and looking after the baby.
PLAYBOY: With what secret projects going on in the basement?
LENNON: That's like what everyone else who has asked me that question over the last few years says. "But what else have you been doing?" To which I say, "Are you kidding?" Because bread and babies, as every housewife knows, is a full-time job. After I made the loaves, I felt like I had conquered something. But as I watched the bread being eaten, I thought, Well, Jesus, don't I get a gold record or knighted or nothing?
PLAYBOY: Why did you become a house-husband?
LENNON: There were many reasons. I had been under obligation or contract from the time I was 22 until well into my 30s. After all those years, it was all I knew. I wasn't free. I was boxed in. My contract was the physical manifestation of being in prison. It was more important to face

myself and face that reality than to continue a life of rock 'n' roll—and to go up and down with the whims of either your own performance or the public's opinion of you. Rock 'n' roll was not fun anymore. I chose not to take the standard options in my business—going to Vegas and singing your great hits, if you're lucky, or going to hell, which is where Elvis went.

ONO: John was like an artist who is very good at drawing circles. He sticks to that and it becomes his label. He has a gallery to promote that. And the next year, he will do triangles or something. It doesn't reflect his life at all. When you continue doing the same thing for 10 years, you get a prize for having done it.

LENNON: You get the big prize when you get cancer and you have been drawing circles and triangles for 10 years. I had become a craftsman and I could have continued being a craftsman. I respect craftsmen, but I am not interested in becoming one.

ONO: Just to prove that you can go on dishing out things.

PLAYBOY: You're talking about records, of course.

LENNON: Yeah, to churn them out because I was expected to, like so many people who put out an album every six months because they're supposed to.

PLAYBOY: Would you be referring to Paul McCartney?

LENNON: Not only Paul. But I had lost the initial freedom of the artist by becoming enslaved to the image of what the artist is supposed to do. A lot of artists kill themselves because of it, whether it is through drink, like Dylan Thomas, or through insanity, like Van Gogh, or through V.D., like Gauguin.

PLAYBOY: Most people would have continued to churn out the product. How were you able to see a way out?

LENNON: Most people don't live with Yoko Ono.

PLAYBOY: Which means?

LENNON: Most people don't have a companion who will tell the truth and refuse to live with a bullshit artist, which I am pretty good at. I can bullshit myself and everybody around. Yoko: That's my answer.

PLAYBOY: What did she do for you?

LENNON: She showed me the possibility of the alternative. "You don't have to do this." "I don't? Really? But but but but but...." Of course, it wasn't that simple and it didn't sink in overnight. It took constant reinforcement. Walking away is much harder than carrying on. I've done both. On demand and on schedule, I had turned out records from 1962 to 1975. Walking away seemed like what the guys go through at 65, when suddenly they're supposed to not exist anymore and they're sent out of the office [knocks on the desk three times]: "Your life is over. Time for golf."

PLAYBOY: Yoko, how did you feel about John's becoming a househusband?

ONO: When John and I would go out, people would come up and say, "John, what are you doing?" but they never asked about me, because, as a woman, I wasn't supposed to be doing anything.

LENNON: When I was cleaning the cat shit and feeding Sean, she was sitting in rooms full of smoke with men in three-piece suits that they couldn't button.

ONO: I handled the business: old business—Apple, Maclen [the Beatles' record company and publishing company, respectively] and new investments.

LENNON: We had to face the business. It was either another case of asking some daddy to come solve our business or having one of us do it. Those lawyers were getting a quarter of a million dollars a year to sit around a table and eat salmon at the Plaza. Most of them didn't seem interested in solving the problems. Every lawyer had a lawyer. Each Beatle had four or five people working. So we felt we had to look after that side of the business and get rid of it and deal with it before we could start dealing with our own life. And the only one of us who has the talent or the ability to deal with it on that level is Yoko

PLAYBOY: Did you have experience handling business matters of that proportion?

ONO: I learned. The law is not a mystery to me anymore. Politicians are not a mystery to me. I'm not scared of all that establishment anymore. At first, my own accountant and my own lawyer could not deal with the fact that I was telling them what to do

LENNON: There was a bit of an attitude that this is John's wife, but surely she can't really be representing him.

ONO: A lawyer would send a letter to the directors, but instead of sending it to me, he would send it to John or send it to my lawyer. You'd be surprised how much insult I took from them initially. There was all this, "But you don't know anything about law; I can't talk to you." I said, "All right, talk to me in the way I can understand it. I am a director too."

LENNON: They can't stand it. But they have to stand it, because she is who represents us. [Chuckles] They're all male, you know, just big and fat, vodka lunch, shouting males, like trained dogs, trained to attack all the time. Recently, she made it possible for us to earn a large sum of money that benefited all of them and they fought and fought not to let her do it, because it was her idea and she was a woman and she was not a professional. But she did it, and then one of the guys said to her, "Well, Lennon does it again." But Lennon didn't have anything to do with it.

> "You know, I don't believe in yesterday.... Do we have to be crucified again because a whole pile of dummies missed it the first time?"

PLAYBOY: Why are you returning to the studio and public life?

LENNON: You breathe in and you breathe out. We feel like doing it and we have something to say. Also, Yoko and I attempted a few times to make music together, but that was a long time ago and people still had the idea that the Beatles were some kind of sacred thing that shouldn't step outside its circle. It was hard for us to work together then. We think either people have forgotten or they have grown up by now, so we can make a second foray into that place where she and I are together, making music—simply that. It's not like I'm some wondrous, mystic prince from the rock-'n'-roll world dabbling in strange music with this exotic, Oriental dragon lady, which was the picture projected by the press before.

PLAYBOY: Some people have accused you of playing to the media. First you become a recluse, then you talk selectively to the press because you have a new album coming out.

LENNON: That's ridiculous. People always said John and Yoko would do anything for the publicity. In the Newsweek article [September 29, 1980], it says the reporter asked us, "Why did you go underground?" Well, she never asked it that way and I didn't go underground. I just stopped talking to the press.

It got to be pretty funny. I was calling myself Greta Hughes or Howard Garbo through that period. But still the gossip items never stopped. We never stopped being in the press, but there seemed to be more written about us when we weren't talking to the press than when we were.

PLAYBOY: How do you feel about all the negative press that's been directed through the years at Yoko, your "dragon lady," as you put it?

LENNON: We are both sensitive people and we were hurt a lot by it. I mean, we couldn't understand it. When you're in love, when somebody says something like, "How can you be with that woman?" you say, "What do you mean? I am with this goddess of love, the fulfillment of my whole life. Why are you saying this? Why do you want to throw a rock at her

or punish me for being in love with her?" Our love helped us survive it, but some of it was pretty violent. There were a few times when we nearly went under, but we managed to survive and here we are. [*Looks upward*] Thank you, thank you, thank you.

PLAYBOY: But what about the charge that John Lennon is under Yoko's spell, under her control?

LENNON: Well, that's rubbish, you know. Nobody controls me. I'm uncontrollable. The only one who controls me is me, and that's just barely possible.

PLAYBOY: Still, many people believe it.

LENNON: Listen, if somebody's gonna impress me, whether it be a Maharishi or a Yoko Ono, there comes a point when the emperor has no clothes. There comes a point when I will see. So for all you folks out there who think that I'm having the wool pulled over my eyes, well, that's an insult to me. Not that you think less of Yoko, because that's your problem. What I think of her is what counts! Because—fuck you, brother and sister you don't know what's happening. I'm not here for you. I'm here for me and her and the baby!

ONO: Of course, it's a total insult to me—

LENNON: Well, you're always insulted, my dear wife. It's natural—

ONO: Why should I bother to control anybody?

LENNON: She doesn't need me.

ONO: I have my own life, you know.

LENNON: She doesn't need a Beatle. Who needs a Beatle?

ONO: Do people think I'm that much of a con? John lasted two months with the Maharishi. Two months. I must be the biggest con in the world, because I've been with him 13 years.

LENNON: But people do say that.

PLAYBOY: That's our point. Why?

LENNON: They want to hold on to something they never had in the first place. Anybody who claims to have some interest in me as an individual artist or even as part of the Beatles has absolutely misunderstood everything I ever said if they can't see why I'm with Yoko. And if they can't see that, they don't see anything. They're just jacking off to—it could be anybody. Mick Jagger or somebody else. Let them go jack off to Mick Jagger, okay? I don't need it.

PLAYBOY: He'll appreciate that.

LENNON: I absolutely don't need it. Let them chase Wings. Just forget about me. If that's what you want, go after Paul or Mick. I ain't here for that. If that's not apparent in my past, I'm saying it in black and green, next to all the tits and asses on page 196. Go play with the other boys. Don't bother me. Go play with the Rolling Wings.

PLAYBOY: Do you—

LENNON: No, wait a minute. Let's stay with this a second; sometimes I can't let go of it. [He is on his feet, climbing up the refrigerator] Nobody ever said anything about Paul's having a spell on me or my having one on Paul! They never thought that was abnormal in those days, two guys together, or four guys together! Why didn't they ever say, "How come those guys don't split up? I mean, what's going on backstage? What is this Paul and John business? How can they be together so long?" We spent more time together in the early days than John and Yoko: the four of us sleeping in the same room, practically in the same bed, in the same truck, living together night and day, eating, shitting and pissing together! All right? Doing everything together! Nobody said a damn thing about being under a spell. Maybe they said we were under the spell of Brian Epstein or George Martin [the Beatles' first manager and producer, respectively]. There's always somebody who has to be doing something to you.

"The Beatles don't exist and can never exist again. We are not in our 20s. We cannot be that again, nor can the people who are listening."

You know, they're congratulating the Stones on being together 112 years. Whoooopee! At least Charlie and Bill still got their families. In the '80s, they'll be asking, "Why are those guys still together? Can't they hack it on their own? Why do they have to be surrounded by a gang? Is the little leader scared somebody's gonna knife him in the back?" That's gonna be the question. That's-a-gonna be the question! They're gonna look back at the Beatles and the Stones and all those guys are relics. The days when those bands were just all men will be on the newsreels, you know. They will be showing pictures of the guy with lipstick wriggling his ass and the four guys with the evil black make-up on their eyes trying to look raunchy. That's gonna be the joke in the future, not a couple singing together or living and working together. It's all right when you're 16, 17, 18 to have male companions and idols, okay? It's tribal and it's gang and it's fine. But when it continues and you're still doing it when you're 40, that means you're still 16 in the head.

PLAYBOY: Let's start at the beginning. Tell us the story of how the wondrous mystic prince and the exotic dragon lady met.

LENNON: It was in 1966 in England I'd been told about this "event" this Japanese avant-garde artist coming from America.

I was looking around the gallery and I saw this ladder and climbed up and got a look in this spyglass on the top of the ladder you feel like a fool and it just said, yes. Now, at the time, all the avant-garde was smash the piano with a hammer and break the sculpture and anti-, anti-, anti-, anti-, anti. It was all boring negative crap, you know. And just that yes made me stay in a gallery full of apples and nails.

There was a sign that said, Hammer a nail in, so I said, "Can I hammer a nail in?" But Yoko said no, because the show wasn't opening until the next day. But the owner came up and whispered to her, "Let him hammer a nail in. You know, he's a millionaire. He might buy it." And so there was this little conference, and finally she said, "Okay, you can hammer a nail in for five shillings." So smartass says, "Well, I'll give you an imaginary five shillings and hammer an imaginary nail in." And that's when we really met. That's when we locked eyes and she got it and I got it and, as they say in all the interviews we do, the rest is history.

PLAYBOY: What happened next?

LENNON: Of course, I was a Beatle, but things had begun to change. In 1966, just before we met, I went to Almería, Spain, to make the movie How I Won the War. It did me a lot of good to get away. I was there six weeks. I wrote "Strawberry Fields Forever" there, by the way. It gave me time to think on my own, away from the others. From then on, I was looking for somewhere to go, but I didn't have the nerve to really step out on the boat by myself and push it off. But when I fell in love with Yoko, I knew, My God, this is different from anything I've ever known. This is something other This is more than a hit record, more than gold, more than everything. It is indescribable.

PLAYBOY: Were falling in love with Yoko and wanting to leave the Beatles connected?

LENNON: As I said, I had already begun to want to leave, but when I met Yoko is like when you meet your first woman. You leave the guys at the bar. You don't go play football anymore. You don't go play snooker or billiards. Maybe some guys do it on Friday night or something, but once I found the woman, the boys became of no interest whatsoever other than being old school friends. "Those wedding bells are breaking up that old gang of mine." We got married three years later, in 1969. That was the end of the boys. And it just so happened that the boys were well known and

weren't just local guys at the bar. Everybody got so upset over it. There was a lot of shit thrown at us. A lot of hateful stuff.

ONO: Even now, I just read that Paul said, "I understand that he wants to be with her, but why does he have to be with her all the time?"

LENNON: Yoko, do you still have to carry that cross? That was years ago.

ONO: No, no, no. He said it recently. I mean, what happened with John is like, I sort of went to bed with this guy that I liked and suddenly the next morning, I see these three in-laws, standing there.

LENNON: I've always thought there was this underlying thing in Paul's "Get Back." When we were in the studio recording it, every time he sang the line "Get back to where you once belonged," he'd look at Yoko.

PLAYBOY: Are you kidding?

LENNON: No. But maybe he'll say I'm paranoid.

[*The next portion of the interview took place with Lennon alone.*]

PLAYBOY: This may be the time to talk about those "in-laws," as Yoko put it. John, you've been asked this a thousand times, but why is it so unthinkable that the Beatles might get back together to make some music?

LENNON: Do you want to go back to high school? Why should I go back 10 years to provide an illusion for you that I know does not exist? It cannot exist.

PLAYBOY: Then forget the illusion. What about just to make some great music again? Do you acknowledge that the Beatles made great music?

LENNON: Why should the Beatles give more? Didn't they give everything on God's earth for 10 years? Didn't they give themselves? You're like the typical sort of love-hate fan who says, "Thank you for everything you did for us in the '60s—would you just give me another shot? Just one more miracle?"

PLAYBOY: We're not talking about miracles—just good music.

LENNON: When Rodgers worked with Hart and then worked with Hammerstein, do you think he should have stayed with one instead of working with the other? Should Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis have stayed together because I used to like them together? What is this game of doing things because other people want it? The whole Beatle idea was to do what you want, right? To take your own responsibility.

PLAYBOY: All right, but get back to the music itself. You don't agree that the Beatles created the best rock 'n' roll that's been produced?

LENNON: I don't. The Beatles, you see—I'm too involved in them artistically. I cannot see them objectively. I cannot listen to them objectively. I'm dissatisfied with every record the Beatles ever fucking made. There ain't one of them I wouldn't remake—including all the Beatles records and all my individual ones. So I cannot possibly give you an assessment of what the Beatles are.

When I was a Beatle, I thought we were the best fucking group in the goddamned world. And believing that is what made us what were were—whether we call it the best rock-'n'-roll group or the best pop group or whatever But you play me those tracks today and I want to remake every damn one of them. There's not a single one.... I heard "Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds" on the radio last night. It's abysmal, you know. The track is just terrible. I mean, it's great, but it wasn't made right, know what I mean? But that's the artistic trip, isn't it? That's why you keep going. But to get back to your original question about the Beatles and their music, the answer is that we did some good stuff and we did some bad stuff.

PLAYBOY: Many people feel that none of the songs Paul has done alone match the songs he did as a Beatle. Do you honestly feel that any of your songs—on the Plastic Ono Band records—will have the lasting imprint of "Eleanor Rigby" or "Strawberry Fields"?

LENNON: "Imagine," "Love" and those Plastic Ono Band songs stand up to any song that was written when I was a Beatle. Now, it may take you 20 or 30 years to appreciate that, but the fact is, if you check those songs out, you will see that it is as good as any fucking stuff that was ever done.

PLAYBOY: It seems as if you're trying to say to the world, "We were just a good band making some good music," while a lot of the rest of the world is saying, "It wasn't just some good music, it was the best."

LENNON: Well, if it was the best, so what?

PLAYBOY: So—

LENNON: It can never be again! Everyone always talks about a good thing coming to an end, as if life was over. But I'll be 40 when this interview comes out. Paul is 38. Elton John, Bob Dylan—we're all relatively young people. The game isn't over yet. Everyone talks in terms of the last record or the last Beatle concert but, God willing, there are another 40 years of productivity to go. I'm not judging whether "I Am the Walrus" is better or worse than "Imagine." It is for others to judge. I am doing it. I do. I don't stand back and judge—I do.

PLAYBOY: You keep saying you don't want to go back 10 years, that too much has changed. Don't you ever feel it would be interesting—never mind cosmic, just interesting to get together, with all your new experiences, and cross your talents?

LENNON: Wouldn't it be interesting to take Elvis back to his Sun Records period? I don't know. But I'm content to listen to his Sun Records. I don't want to dig him up out of the grave. The Beatles don't exist and can never exist again. John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Richard Starkey could put on a concert but it can never be the Beatles singing "Strawberry Fields" or "I Am the Walrus" again, because we are not in our 20s. We cannot be that again, nor can the people who are listening.

PLAYBOY: But aren't you the one who is making it too important? What if it were just nostalgic fun? A high school reunion?

LENNON: I never went to high school reunions. My thing is, Out of sight, out of mind. That's my attitude toward life. So I don't have any romanticism about any part of my past. I think of it only inasmuch as it gave me pleasure or helped me grow psychologically. That is the only thing that interests me about yesterday. I don't believe in yesterday, by the way. You know I don't believe in yesterday. I am only interested in what I am doing now.

PLAYBOY: What about the people of your generation, the ones who feel a certain kind of music—and spirit died when the Beatles broke up?

LENNON: If they didn't understand the Beatles and the '60s then, what the fuck could we do for them now? Do we have to divide the fish and the loaves for the multitudes again? Do we have to get crucified again? Do we have to do the walking on water again because a whole pile of dummies didn't see it the first time, or didn't believe it when they saw it? You know, that's what they're asking: "Get off the cross. I didn't understand the first bit yet. Can you do that again?" No way. You can never go home. It doesn't exist.

PLAYBOY: Do you find that the clamor for a Beatles reunion has died down?

LENNON: Well, I heard some Beatles stuff on the radio the other day and I heard "Green Onion" no, "Glass Onion." I don't even know my

> "Men never developed the inner wisdom; they didn't have time. So most men do rely on women's inner wisdom, whether they express that or not."

own songs! I listened to it because it was a rare track

PLAYBOY: That was the one that contributed to the "Paul McCartney is dead" uproar because of the lyric "The walrus is Paul."

LENNON: Yeah. That line was a joke, you know. That line was put in partly because I was feeling guilty because I was with Yoko, and I knew I was finally high and dry. In a perverse way, I was sort of saying to Paul, "Here, have this crumb, have this illusion, have this stroke—because I'm leaving you." Anyway, it's a song they don't usually play. When a radio station has a Beatles weekend, they usually play the same 10 songs—"A Hard Day's Night," "Help!," "Yesterday," "Something," "Let It Be" you know, there's all that wealth of material, but we hear only 10 songs. So the deejay says, "I want to thank John, Paul, George and Ringo for not getting back together and spoiling a good thing." I thought it was a good sign. Maybe people are catching on.

PLAYBOY: Aside from the millions you've been offered for a reunion concert, how did you feel about producer Lorne Michaels's generous offer of R55,700.00 for appearing together on Saturday Night Live a few years ago?

LENNON: Oh, yeah. Paul and I were together watching that show. He was visiting us at our place in the Dakota. We were watching it and almost went down to the studio, just as a gag. We nearly got into a cab, but we were actually too tired.

PLAYBOY: How did you and Paul happen to be watching TV together?

LENNON: That was a period when Paul just kept turning up at our door with a guitar. I would let him in, but finally I said to him, "Please call before you come over. It's not 1956 and turning up at the door isn't the same anymore. You know, just give me a ring." He was upset by that, but I didn't mean it badly. I just meant that I was taking care of a baby all day and some guy turns up at the door…. But, anyway, back on that night, he and Linda walked in and he and I were just sitting there, watching the show, and we went, "Ha-ha, wouldn't it be funny if we went down?" but we didn't.

PLAYBOY: Was that the last time you saw Paul?

LENNON: Yes, but I didn't mean it like that.

PLAYBOY: We're asking because there's always a lot of speculation about whether the Fab Four are dreaded enemies or the best of friends.

LENNON: We're neither. I haven't seen any of the Beatles for I don't know how much time. Somebody asked me what I thought of Paul's last album and I made some remark like, I thought he was depressed and sad. But then I realized I hadn't listened to the whole damn thing. I heard one track the hit "Coming Up," which I thought was a good piece of work. Then I heard something else that sounded like he was depressed. But I don't follow their work. I don't follow Wings, you know. I don't give a shit what Wings is doing, or what George's new album is doing, or what Ringo is doing. I'm not interested, no more than I am in what Elton John or Bob Dylan is doing. It's not callousness, it's just that I'm too busy living my own life to be following what other people are doing, whether they're the Beatles or guys I went to college with or people I had intense relationships with before I met the Beatles.

PLAYBOY: Besides "Coming Up," what do you think of Paul's work since he left the Beatles?

LENNON: I kind of admire the way Paul started back from scratch, forming a new band and playing in small dance halls, because that's what he wanted to do with the Beatles—he wanted us to go back to the dance halls and experience that again. But I didn't. That was one of the problems, in a way, that he wanted to relive it all or something I don't know what it was. But I kind of admire the way he got off his pedestal now he's back on it again, but I mean, he did what he wanted to do. That's fine, but it's just not what I wanted to do.

PLAYBOY: What about the music?

LENNON: "The Long and Winding Road" was the last gasp from him. Although I really haven't listened.

PLAYBOY: You say you haven't listened to Paul's work and haven't really talked to him since that night in your apartment

LENNON: Really talked to him, no, that's the operative word. I haven't really talked to him in 10 years. Because I haven't spent time with him. I've been doing other things and so has he. You know, he's got 25 kids and about 20 million records out how can he spend time talking? He's always working.

PLAYBOY: Then let's talk about the work you did together. Generally speaking, what did each of you contribute to the Lennon-McCartney songwriting team?

LENNON: Well, you could say that he provided a lightness, an optimism, while I would always go for the sadness, the discords, a certain bluesy edge. There was a period when I thought I didn't write melodies, that Paul wrote those and I just wrote straight, shouting rock 'n' roll. But, of course, when I think of some of my own songs—"In My Life" or some of the early stuff "This Boy" I was writing melody with the best of them. Paul had a lot of training, could play a lot of instruments. He'd say, "Well, why don't you change that there? You've done that note 50 times in the song." You know, I'll grab a note and ram it home. Then again, I'd be the one to figure out where to go with a song—a story that Paul would start. In a lot of the songs, my stuff is the "middle eight," the bridge.

> "People around John saw me as a terrible threat. I mean, I heard there were plans to kill me. Not the Beatles, but the people around them."

PLAYBOY: For example?

LENNON: Take "Michelle." Paul and I were staying somewhere, and he walked in and hummed the first few bars, with the words, you know [*sings verse of "Michelle"*], and he says, "Where do I go from here?" I'd been listening to blues singer Nina Simone, who did something like "I love you!" in one of her songs and that made me think of the middle eight for "Michelle" [*sings]*: "I love you, I love you, I l-o-ove you…."

PLAYBOY: What was the difference in terms of lyrics?

LENNON: I always had an easier time with lyrics, though Paul is quite a capable lyricist who doesn't think he is. So he doesn't go for it. Rather than face the problem, he would avoid it. "Hey Jude" is a damn good set of lyrics. I made no contribution to the lyrics there. And a couple of lines he has come up with show indications of a good lyricist. But he just hasn't taken it anywhere. Still, in the early days, we didn't care about lyrics as long as the song had some vague theme—she loves you, he loves him, they all love each other. It was the hook, line and sound we were going for. That's still my attitude, but I can't leave lyrics alone. I have to make them make sense apart from the songs.

PLAYBOY: What's an example of a lyric you and Paul worked on together?

LENNON: In "We Can Work It Out," Paul did the first half, I did the middle eight But you've got Paul writing, "We can work it out / We can work it out" real optimistic, y' know, and me, impatient: "Life is very short and there's no time / For fussing and fighting, my friend.. "

PLAYBOY: Paul tells the story and John philosophizes.

LENNON: Sure. Well, I was always like that, you know. I was like that

before the Beatles and after the Beatles. I always asked why people did things and why society was like it was. I didn't just accept it for what it was apparently doing. I always looked below the surface.

PLAYBOY: When you talk about working together on a single lyric like "We Can Work It Out," it suggests that you and Paul worked a lot more closely than you've admitted in the past. Haven't you said that you wrote most of your songs separately, despite putting both of your names on them?

LENNON: Yeah, I was lying. [Laughs] It was when I felt resentful, so I felt that we did everything apart. But, actually, a lot of the songs we did eyeball to eyeball.

PLAYBOY: But many of them were done apart, weren't they?

LENNON: Yeah. Sgt. Pepper was Paul's idea, and I remember he worked on it a lot and suddenly called me to go into the studio, said it was time to write some songs On Pepper, under the pressure of only 10 days, I managed to come up with "Lucy in the Sky" and "A Day in the Life." We weren't communicating enough, you see. And later on, that's why I got resentful about all that stuff. But now I understand that it was just the same competitive game going on.

PLAYBOY: But the competitive game was good for you, wasn't it?

LENNON: In the early days. We'd make a record in 12 hours or something; they would want a single every three months and we'd have to write it in a hotel room or in a van. So the cooperation was functional as well as musical.

PLAYBOY: Don't you think that cooperation, that magic between you, is something you've missed in your work since?

LENNON: I never actually felt a loss. I don't want it to sound negative, like I didn't need Paul, because when he was there, obviously, it worked. But I can't it's easier to say what I gave to him than what he gave to me. And he'd say the same.

PLAYBOY: Just a quick aside, but while we're on the subject of lyrics and your resentment of Paul, what made you write "How Do You Sleep?," which contains lyrics such as, "Those freaks was right when they said you was dead" and "The only thing you done was yesterday / And since you've gone, you're just another day"?

LENNON: [*Smiles*] You know, I wasn't really feeling that vicious at the time. But I was using my resentment toward Paul to create a song, let's put it that way. He saw that it pointedly refers to him, and people kept hounding him about it. But, you know, there were a few digs on his album before mine. He's so obscure other people didn't notice them, but I heard them. I thought, Well, I'm not obscure, I just get right down to the nitty-gritty. So he'd done it his way and I did it mine. But as to the line you quoted, yeah, I think Paul died creatively, in a way.

PLAYBOY: That's what we were getting at: You say that what you've done since the Beatles stands up well, but isn't it possible that with all of you, it's been a case of the creative whole being greater than the parts?

LENNON: I don't know whether this will gel for you: When the Beatles played in America for the first time, they played pure craftsmanship. Meaning they were already old hands. The jism had gone out of the performances a long time ago. In the same respect, the songwriting creativity had left Paul and me in the mid-'60s. When we wrote together in the early days, it was like the beginning of a relationship. Lots of energy. In the Sgt. Pepper Abbey Road period, the relationship had matured. Maybe had we gone on together, more interesting things would have come, but it couldn't have been the same

PLAYBOY: Let's move on to Ringo. What's your opinion of him musically?

LENNON: Ringo was a star in his own right in Liverpool before we even met. He was a professional drummer who sang and performed and had Ringo Starr-time and he was in one of the top groups in Britain but especially in Liverpool before we even had a drummer. So Ringo's talent would have come out one way or the other as something or other. I don't know what he would have ended up as, but whatever that spark is in Ringo that we all know but can't put our finger on—whether it is acting, drumming or singing I don't know—there is something in him that is projectable and he would have surfaced with or without the Beatles. Ringo is a damn good drummer. He is not technically good, but I think Ringo's drumming is underrated the same way Paul's bass playing is underrated. Paul was one of the most innovative bass players ever. And half the stuff that is going on now is directly ripped off from his Beatles period. He is an egomaniac about everything else about himself, but his bass playing he was always a bit coy about. I think Paul and Ringo stand up with any of the rock musicians. Not technically great none of us are technical musicians. None of us could read music None of us can write it. But as pure musicians, as inspired humans to make the noise, they are as good as anybody.

PLAYBOY: How about George's solo music?

LENNON: I think All Things Must Pass was all right. It just went on too long.

> "I say to John, 'I carried the baby nine months and that's enough, so you take care of it afterward.' I believe children belong to the society."

PLAYBOY: How did you feel about the lawsuit George lost that claimed the music to "My Sweet Lord" is a rip-off of the Shirelles' hit "He's So Fine"?

LENNON: Well, he walked right into it. He knew what he was doing

PLAYBOY: Are you saying he consciously plagiarized the song?

LENNON: He must have known, you know. He's smarter than that. It's irrelevant, actually only on a monetary level does it matter. He could have changed a couple of bars in that song and nobody could ever have touched him, but he just let it go and paid the price. Maybe he thought God would just sort of let him off. [*At press time, the court has found Harrison guilty of "subconscious" plagiarism but has not yet ruled on damages.*]

PLAYBOY: You actually haven't mentioned George much in this interview.

LENNON: Well, I was hurt by George's book, I, Me, Mine—so this message will go to him. He put a book out privately on his life that, by glaring omission, says that my influence on his life is absolutely zilch and nil. In his book, which is purportedly this clarity of vision of his influence on each song he wrote, he remembers every two-bit sax player or guitarist he met in subsequent years. I'm not in the book.

PLAYBOY: Why?

LENNON: Because George's relationship with me was one of young follower and older guy. He's three or four years younger than me. It's a love-hate relationship and I think George still bears resentment toward me for being a daddy who left home. He would not agree with this, but that's my feeling about it. I was just hurt. I was just left out, as if I didn't exist. I don't want to be that egomaniacal, but he was like a disciple of mine when we started. I was already an art student when Paul and George were still in grammar school [*equivalent to high school in the U.S.*]. There is a vast difference between being in high school and being in college and I was already in college and already had sexual relationships, already drank and did a lot of things like that. When George was a kid, he used to follow me and my first girlfriend, Cynthia—who became my wife—around. We'd come out of art school and he'd be hovering around like those kids at the gate of the Dakota now.

I remember the day he called to ask for help on "Taxman," one of his bigger songs. I threw in a few one-liners to help the song along, because that's what he asked for. He came to me because he couldn't go to Paul, because Paul wouldn't have helped him at that period. I didn't want to do it. I thought, Oh, no, don't tell me I have to work on George's stuff. It's enough doing my own and Paul's. But because I loved him and I didn't want to hurt him when he called me that afternoon and said, "Will you help me with this song?" I just sort of bit my tongue and said okay. It had been John and Paul so long, he'd been left out because he hadn't been a songwriter up until then. As a singer, we allowed him only one track on each album. If you listen to the Beatles' first albums, the English versions, he gets a single track. The songs he and Ringo sang at first were the songs that used to be part of my repertoire in the dance halls. I used to pick songs for them from my repertoire—the easier ones to sing. So I am slightly resentful of George's book. But don't get me wrong. I still love those guys. The Beatles are over, but John, Paul, George and Ringo go on.

PLAYBOY: Didn't all four Beatles work on a song you wrote for Ringo in 1973?

LENNON: "I'm the Greatest." It was the Muhammad Ali line, of course. It was perfect for Ringo to sing. If I said, "I'm the greatest," they'd all take it so seriously. No one would get upset with Ringo singing it.

PLAYBOY: Did you enjoy playing with George and Ringo again?

LENNON: Yeah, except when George and Billy Preston started saying, "Let's form a group. Let's form a group." I was embarrassed when George kept asking me. He was just enjoying the session and the spirit was very good, but I was with Yoko, you know. We took time out from what we were doing. The very fact that they would imagine I would form a male group without Yoko! It was still in their minds....

PLAYBOY: Just to finish your favorite subject, what about the suggestion that the four of you put aside your personal feelings and regroup to give a mammoth concert for charity, some sort of giant benefit?

LENNON: I don't want to have anything to do with benefits. I have been benefited to death.

PLAYBOY: Why?

LENNON: Because they're always rip-offs. I haven't performed for personal gain since 1966, when the Beatles last performed. Every concert since then, Yoko and I did for specific charities, except for a Toronto thing that was a rock-'n'-roll revival. Every one of them was a mess or a rip-off. So now we give money to who we want. You've heard of tithing?

PLAYBOY: That's when you give away a fixed percentage of your income.

LENNON: Right. I am just going to do it privately. I am not going to get locked into that business of saving the world onstage. The show is always a mess and the artist always comes off badly.

PLAYBOY: What about the Bangladesh concert, in which George and other people such as Dylan performed?

LENNON: Bangladesh was caca.

PLAYBOY: You mean because of all the questions that were raised about where the money went?

LENNON: Yeah, right. I can't even talk about it, because it's still a problem. You'll have to check with Mother [Yoko], because she knows the ins and outs of it. I don't. But it's all a rip-off. So forget about it. All of you who are reading this, don't bother sending me all that garbage about, "Just come and save the Indians, come and save the blacks, come and save the war veterans." Anybody I want to save will be helped through our tithing, which is 10 percent of whatever we earn.

PLAYBOY: But that doesn't compare with what one promoter, Sid Bernstein, said you could raise by giving a world-wide televised concert—playing separately, as individuals or together as the Beatles. He estimated you could raise over R3,500.00 million in one day.

LENNON: That was a commercial for Sid Bernstein written with Jewish schmaltz and showbiz and tears, dropping on one knee. It was Al Jolson. Okay. So I don't buy that. Okay.

PLAYBOY: But the fact is, R3,500 00 million to a poverty-stricken country in South America—

LENNON: Where do people get off saying the Beatles should give R3,500 00 million to South America? You know, America has poured billions into places like that. It doesn't mean a damn thing. After they've eaten that meal, then what? It lasts for only a day. After the R3,500 00 million is gone, then what? It goes round and round in circles. You can pour money in forever. After Peru, then Harlem, then Britain. There is no one concert. We would have to dedicate the rest of our lives to one world concert tour, and I'm not ready for it. Not in this lifetime, anyway.

[*Ono rejoins the conversation.*]

PLAYBOY: On the subject of your own wealth, the New York Post recently said you admitted to being worth over R2,650 00 million and

LENNON: We never admitted anything.

PLAYBOY: The Post said you had.

LENNON: What the Post says—okay, so we are rich. So what?

PLAYBOY: The question is, How does that jibe with your political philosophies? You're supposed to be socialists, aren't you?

LENNON: In England, there are only two things to be, basically: You are either for the labor movement or for the capitalist movement. Either you become a right-wing Archie Bunker if you are in the class I am in, or you become an instinctive socialist, which I was. That meant I think people should get their false teeth and their health looked after, all the rest of it. But apart from that, I worked for money and I wanted to be rich. So what the hell—if that's a paradox, then I'm a socialist. But I am not anything. What I used to be is guilty about money. That's why I lost it, either by giving it away or by allowing myself to be screwed by so-called managers.

PLAYBOY: Whatever your politics, you've played the capitalist game very well, parlaying your Beatles royalties into real estate, livestock

ONO: There is no denying that we are still living in the capitalist world. I think that in order to survive and to change the world, you have to take care of yourself first. You have to survive yourself. I used to say to myself, I am the only socialist living here. [Laughs] I don't have a penny. It is all John's, so I'm clean. But I was using his money and I had to face that hypocrisy. I used to think that money was obscene, that the artists didn't have to think about money. But to change society, there are two ways to go: through violence or the power of money within the system. A lot of people in the '60s went underground and were involved in bombings and other violence. But that is not the way, definitely not for me. So to change the system—even if you are going to become a mayor or something—you need money.

PLAYBOY: To what extent do you play the game without getting caught up in it—money for the sake of money, in other words?

ONO: There is a limit. It would probably be parallel to our level of security. Do you know what I mean? I mean the emotional-security level as well.

PLAYBOY: Has it reached that level yet?

ONO: No, not yet. I don't know. It might have.

PLAYBOY: You mean with R2,650.00 million? Is that an accurate estimate?

ONO: I don't know what we have. It becomes so complex that you need to have 10 accountants working for two years to find out what you have. But let's say that we feel more comfortable now.

PLAYBOY: How have you chosen to invest your money?

ONO: To make money, you have to spend money. But if you are going to make money, you have to make it with love. I love Egyptian art. I make sure to get all the Egyptian things, not for their value but for their magic power. Each piece has a certain magic power. Also with houses. I just buy

"This Beatles talk bores me to death."

ones we love, not the ones that people say are good investments.
PLAYBOY: The papers have made it sound like you are buying up the Atlantic Seaboard.
ONO: If you saw the houses, you would understand. They have become a good investment, but they are not an investment unless you sell them. We don't intend to sell. Each house is like a historic landmark and they're very beautiful.
PLAYBOY: Do you actually use all the properties?
ONO: Most people have the park to go to and run in—the park is a huge place—but John and I were never able to go to the park together. So we have to create our own parks, you know.
PLAYBOY: We heard that you own R1,050.00 million worth of dairy cows. Can that be true?
ONO: I don't know. I'm not a calculator. I'm not going by figures. I'm going by excellence of things
LENNON: Sean and I were away for a weekend and Yoko came over to sell this cow and I was joking about it. We hadn't seen her for days; she spent all her time on it. But then I read the paper that said she sold it for a quarter of a million dollars. Only Yoko could sell a cow for that much. [*Laughter*]
PLAYBOY: For an artist, your business sense seems remarkable.
ONO: I was doing it just as a chess game. I love chess. I do everything like it's a chess game. Not on a Monopoly level—that's a bit more realistic. Chess is more conceptual.
PLAYBOY: John, do you really need all those houses around the country?
LENNON: They're good business.
PLAYBOY: Why does anyone need R2,650 00 million? Couldn't you be perfectly content with R1,750.00 million? Or R18.00 million?
LENNON: What would you suggest I do? Give everything away and walk the streets? The Buddhist says, "Get rid of the possessions of the mind." Walking away from all the money would not accomplish that. It's like the Beatles. I couldn't walk away from the Beatles. That's one possession that's still tagging along, right? If I walk away from one house or 400 houses, I'm not gonna escape it.
PLAYBOY: How do you escape it?
LENNON: It takes time to get rid of all this garbage that I've been carrying around that was influencing the way I thought and the way I lived. It had a lot to do with Yoko, showing me that I was still possessed. I left physically when I fell in love with Yoko, but mentally it took the last 10 years of struggling. I learned everything from her.
PLAYBOY: You make it sound like a teacher-pupil relationship.
LENNON: It is a teacher-pupil relationship. That's what people don't understand. She's the teacher and I'm the pupil. I'm the famous one, the one who's supposed to know everything, but she's my teacher. She's taught me everything I fucking know. She was there when I was nowhere, when I was the nowhere man. She's my Don Juan [a reference to Carlos Castaneda's Yaqui Indian teacher]. That's what people don't understand. I'm married to fucking Don Juan, that's the hardship of it. Don Juan doesn't have to laugh; Don Juan doesn't have to be charming; Don Juan just is. And what goes on around Don Juan is irrelevant to Don Juan.
PLAYBOY: Yoko, how do you feel about being John's teacher?
ONO: Well, he had a lot of experience before he met me, the kind of experience I never had. so I learned a lot from him, too. It's both ways. Maybe it's that I have strength, a feminine strength. Because women develop it in a relationship, I think women really have the inner wisdom and they're carrying that while men have sort of the wisdom to cope with society, since they created it. Men never developed the inner wisdom; they didn't have time. So most men do rely on women's inner wisdom, whether they express that or not.
PLAYBOY: Is Yoko John's guru?
LENNON: No, a Don Juan doesn't have a following. A Don Juan isn't in the newspaper and doesn't have disciples and doesn't proselytize.
PLAYBOY: How has she taught you?
LENNON: When Don Juan said when Don Ono said, "Get out! Because you're not getting it," well, it was like being sent into the desert. And the reason she wouldn't let me back in was because I wasn't ready to come back in. I had to settle things within myself. When I was ready to come back in, she let me back in. And that's what I'm living with.
PLAYBOY: You're talking about your separation.
LENNON: Yes. We were separated in the early '70s. She kicked me out. Suddenly, I was on a raft alone in the middle of the universe.
PLAYBOY: What happened?
LENNON: Well, at first, I thought, Whoopee, whoopee! You know, bachelor life! Whoopee! And then I woke up one day and I thought. What is this? I want to go home! But she wouldn't let me come home. That's why it was 18 months apart instead of six months. We were talking all the time on the phone and I would say, "I don't like this, I'm getting in trouble and I'd like to come home, please." And she would say, "You're not ready to come home." So what do you say? Okay, back to the bottle.
PLAYBOY: What did she mean, you weren't ready?
LENNON: She has her ways. Whether they be mystical or practical. When she said it's not ready, it ain't ready.
PLAYBOY: Back to the bottle?
LENNON: I was just trying to hide what I felt in the bottle. I was just insane. It was the lost weekend that lasted 18 months. I've never drunk so much in my life. I tried to drown myself in the bottle and I was with the heaviest drinkers in the business.
PLAYBOY: Such as?
LENNON: Such as Harry Nilsson, Bobby Keyes, Keith Moon. We couldn't pull ourselves out. We were trying to kill ourselves. I think Harry might still be trying, poor bugger God bless you, Harry, wherever you are—but, Jesus, you know, I had to get away from that, because somebody was going to die. Well, Keith did. It was like, who's going to die first? Unfortunately, Keith was the one
PLAYBOY: Why the self-destruction?
LENNON: For me, it was because of being apart. I couldn't stand it. They had their own reasons, and it was. Let's all drown ourselves together. From where I was sitting, it looked like that. Let's kill ourselves but do it like Errol Flynn, you know, the macho, male way It's embarrassing for me to think about that period, because I made a big fool of myself but maybe it was a good lesson for me.

I wrote "Nobody Loves You When You're Down and Out" during that time. That's how I felt. It exactly expresses the whole period. For some reason, I always imagined Sinatra singing that one. I don't know why. It's kind of a Sinatra-esque song, really. He would do a perfect job with it. Are you listening, Frank? You need a song that isn't a piece of nothing. Here's the one for you, the horn arrangement and everything's made for you. But don't ask me to produce it.
PLAYBOY: That must have been the time the papers came out with reports about Lennon running around town with a Tampax on his head.
LENNON: The stories were all so exaggerated, but…. We were all in a restaurant, drinking, not eating, as usual at those gatherings, and I happened to go take a pee and there was a brand-new fresh Kotex, not Tampax, on the toilet. You know the old trick where you put a penny on your forehead and it sticks? I was a little high and I just picked it up and slapped it on and it stayed, you see. I walked out of the bathroom and I had a Kotex on my head. Big deal. Everybody went "Ha-ha-ha" and it fell off, but the press blew it up
PLAYBOY: Why did you kick John out, Yoko?
ONO: There were many things. I'm what I call a "moving on" kind of girl; there's a song on our new album about it. Rather than deal with problems in relationships, I've always moved on. That's why I'm one of the very few survivors as a woman, you know. Women tend to be more into men usually, but I wasn't….
__ LENNON: Yoko looks upon men as assistants—of varying degrees of intimacy, but basically assistants. And this one's going to take a pee. [*He exits*]

ONO: I have no comment on that. But when I met John, women to him were basically people around who were serving him. He had to open himself up and face me—and I had to see what he was going through. But I thought I had to move on again, because I was suffering being with John.
PLAYBOY: Why?
ONO: The pressure from the public, being the one who broke up the Beatles and who made it impossible for them to get back together. My artwork suffered too. I thought I wanted to be free from being Mrs. Lennon, so I thought it would be a good idea for him to go to L.A. and leave me alone for a while. I had put up with it for many years. Even early on, when John was a Beatle, we stayed in a room and John and I were in bed and the door was closed and all that, but we didn't lock the door and one of the Beatle assistants just walked in and talked to him as if I weren't there. It was mind-blowing. I was invisible. The people around John saw me as a terrible threat. I mean, I heard there were plans to kill me. Not the Beatles but the people around them.
PLAYBOY: How did that news affect you?
ONO: The society doesn't understand that the woman can be castrated too. I felt castrated. Before, I was doing all right, thank you. My work might not have been selling much, I might have been poorer, but I had my pride. But the most humiliating thing is to be looked at as a parasite
[*Lennon rejoins the conversation.*]
LENNON: When Yoko and I started doing stuff together, we would hold press conferences and announce our whatevers—we're going to wear bags or whatever. And before this one press conference, one Beatle assistant in the upper echelon of Beatle assistants leaned over to Yoko and said, "You know, you don't have to work. You've got enough money, now that you're Mrs. Lennon." And when she complained to me about it, I couldn't understand what she was talking about. "But this guy," I'd say. "He's just good old Charley, or whatever. He's been with us 20 years...." The same kind of thing happened in the studio. She would say to an engineer, "I'd like a little more treble, a little more bass," or "There's too much of whatever you're putting on," and they'd look at me and say, "What did you say, John?" Those days I didn't even notice it myself. Now I know what she's talking about. In Japan, when I ask for a cup of tea in Japanese, they look at Yoko and ask, "He wants a cup of tea?" in Japanese.
ONO: So a good few years of that kind of thing emasculates you. I had always been more macho than most guys I was with, in a sense. I had always been the breadwinner, because I always wanted to have the freedom and the control. Suddenly, I'm with somebody I can't possibly compete with on a level of earnings. Finally, I couldn't take it—or I decided not to take it any longer. I would have had the same difficulty even if I hadn't gotten involved with, ah—
LENNON: John. John is the name.
ONO: With John. But John wasn't just John. He was also his group and the people around them. When I say John, it's not just John—
LENNON: That's John. J-O-H-N. From Johan, I believe.
PLAYBOY: So you made him leave?
ONO: Yes.
LENNON: She don't suffer fools gladly, even if she's married to him.
PLAYBOY: How did you finally get back together?
ONO: It slowly started to dawn on me that John was not the trouble at all. John was a fine person. It was society that had become too much. We laugh about it now, but we started dating again. I wanted to be sure. I'm thankful to John's intelligence—
LENNON: Now, get that, editors—you got that word?
ONO: That he was intelligent enough to know this was the only way that we could save our marriage, not because we didn't love each other but because it was getting too much for me. Nothing would have changed if I had come back as Mrs. Lennon again.
PLAYBOY: What did change?
ONO: It was good for me to do the business and regain my pride about what I could do. And it was good to know what he needed, the role reversal that was so good for him.
LENNON: And we learned that it's better for the family if we are both working for the family, she doing the business and me playing mother and wife. We reordered our priorities. The number-one priority is her and the family. Everything else revolves around that.
ONO: It's a hard realization. These days, the society prefers single people. The encouragements are to divorce or separate or be single or gay whatever. Corporations want singles—they work harder if they don't have family ties. They don't have to worry about being home in the evenings or on the weekends. There's not much room for emotions about family or personal relationships. You know, the whole thing they say to women approaching 30 that if you don't have a baby in the next few years, you're going to be in trouble, you'll never be a mother, so you'll never be fulfilled in that way and—
LENNON: Only Yoko was 73 when she had Sean. [*Laughter*]
There was something wrong with me, I thought, because I seemed to see things other people didn't see. I thought I was crazy or an egomaniac for claiming to see things other people didn't see.
ONO: So instead of the society discouraging children, since they are important for society, it should encourage them. It's the responsibility of everybody. But it is hard. A woman has to deny what she has, her womb, if she wants to make it. It seems that only the privileged classes can have families. Nowadays, maybe it's only the McCartneys and the Lennons or something.
LENNON: Everybody else becomes a worker-consumer.
ONO: And then Big Brother will decide—I hate to use the term Big Brother....
LENNON: Too late. They've got it on tape. [Laughs]
ONO: But, finally, the society—
LENNON: Big Sister wait till she comes!
ONO: The society will do away with the roles of men and women. Babies will be born in test tubes and incubators....
LENNON: Then it's Aldous Huxley.
ONO: But we don't have to go that way. We don't have to deny any of our organs, you know.
LENNON: Some of my best friends are organs—
ONO: The new album—
LENNON: Back to the album, very good.
ONO: The album fights these things. The messages are sort of old-fashioned—family, relationships, children.
PLAYBOY: The album obviously reflects your new priorities. How have things gone for you since you made that decision?
LENNON: We got back together, decided this was our life, that having a baby was important to us and that anything else was subsidiary to that. We worked hard for that child. We went through all hell trying to have a baby, through many miscarriages and other problems. He is what they call a love child in truth. Doctors told us we could never have a child. We almost gave up. "Well, that's it, then, we can't have one...." We were told something was wrong with my sperm, that I abused myself so much in my youth that there was no chance. Yoko was 43, and so they said, no way. She has had too many miscarriages and when she was a young girl, there were no pills, so there were lots of abortions and miscarriages; her stomach must be like Kew Gardens in London. No way. But this Chinese acupuncturist in San Francisco said, "You behave yourself. No drugs, eat well, no drink. You have child in 18 months." And we said, "But the English doctors said...." He said. "Forget what they said. You have child." We had Sean and sent the acupuncturist a Polaroid of him just before he died, God rest his soul.
PLAYBOY: Were there any problems because of Yoko's age?
LENNON: Not because of her age but because of a screw-up in the hospital and the fucking price of fame. Somebody had made a transfusion of the wrong blood type into Yoko. I was there when it happened, and she starts to go rigid, and then shake, from the pain and the trauma. I run up to this nurse and say, "Go get the doctor!" I'm holding on tight to Yoko while this guy gets to the hospital room. He walks in, hardly notices that

Yoko is going through fucking convulsions, goes straight for me, smiles, shakes my hand and says, "I've always wanted to meet you, Mr. Lennon, I always enjoyed your music." I start screaming: "My wife's dying and you wanna talk about my music!" Christ!

PLAYBOY: Now that Sean is almost five, is he conscious of the fact that his father was a Beatle or have you protected him from your fame?

LENNON: I haven't said anything. Beatles were never mentioned to him. There was no reason to mention it; we never played Beatle records around the house, unlike the story that went around that I was sitting in the kitchen for the past five years, playing Beatle records and reliving my past like some kind of Howard Hughes. He did see Yellow Submarine at a friend's, so I had to explain what a cartoon of me was doing in a movie.

PLAYBOY: Does he have an awareness of the Beatles?

LENNON: He doesn't differentiate between the Beatles and Daddy and Mommy. He thinks Yoko was a Beatle too. I don't have Beatle records on the jukebox he listens to. He's more exposed to early rock 'n' roll. He's into "Hound Dog." He thinks it's about hunting.

Sean's not going to public school, by the way. We feel he can learn the three Rs when he wants to—or when the law says he has to, I suppose. I'm not going to fight it. Otherwise, there's no reason for him to be learning to sit still. I can't see; my reason for it. Sean now has plenty of child companionship, which everybody says is important, but he also is with adults a lot. He's adjusted to both.

The reason why kids are crazy is because nobody can face the responsibility of bringing them up. Everybody's too scared to deal with children all the time, so we reject them and send them away and torture them. The ones who survive are the conformists—their bodies are cut to the size of the suits—the ones we label good. The ones who don't fit the suits either are put in mental homes or become artists.

PLAYBOY: Your son, Julian, from your first marriage must be in his teens. Have you seen him over the years?

LENNON: Well, Cyn got possession, or whatever you call it. I got rights to see him on his holidays and all that business, and at least there's an open line still going. It's not the best relationship between father and son, but it is there. He's 17 now. Julian and I will have a relationship in the future. Over the years, he's been able to see through the Beatle image and to see through the image that his mother will have given him, subconsciously or consciously. He's interested in girls and autobikes now. I'm just sort of a figure in the sky, but he's obliged to communicate with me, even when he probably doesn't want to.

PLAYBOY: You're being very honest about your feelings toward him to the point of saying that Sean is your first child. Are you concerned about hurting him?

LENNON: I'm not going to lie to Julian. Ninety percent of the people on this planet, especially in the West, were born out of a bottle of whiskey on a Saturday night, and there was no intent to have children. So 90 percent of us—that includes everybody—were accidents. I don't know anybody who was a planned child. All of us were Saturday-night specials. Julian is in the majority, along with me and everybody else. Sean is a planned child, and therein lies the difference. I don't love Julian any less as a child. He's still my son, whether he came from a bottle of whiskey or because they didn't have pills in those days. He's here, he belongs to me and he always will.

PLAYBOY: Yoko, your relationship with your daughter has been much rockier.

ONO: I lost Kyoko when she was about five. I was sort of an offbeat mother, but we had very good communication. I wasn't particularly taking care of her, but she was always with me—onstage or at gallery shows, whatever. When she was not even a year old, I took her onstage as an instrument an uncontrollable instrument, you know. My communication with her was on the level of sharing conversation and doing things. She was closer to my ex-husband because of that.

PLAYBOY: What happened when she was five?

ONO: John and I got together and I separated from my ex-husband [*Tony Cox*]. He took Kyoko away. It became a case of parent kidnaping and we tried to get her back.

LENNON: It was a classic case of men being macho. It turned into me and Allen Klein trying to dominate Tony Cox. Tony's attitude was, "You got my wife, but you won't get my child." In this battle, Yoko and the child were absolutely forgotten. I've always felt bad about it. It became a case of the shoot-out at the O.K. Corral· Cox fled to the hills and hid out and the sheriff and I tracked him down. First we won custody in court. Yoko didn't want to go to court, but the men, Klein and I, did it anyway.

ONO: Allen called up one day, saying I won the court case. He gave me a piece of paper. I said. "What is this piece of paper? Is this what I won? I don't have my child." I knew that taking them to court would frighten them and, of course, it did frighten them. So Tony vanished. He was very strong, thinking that the capitalists, with their money and lawyers and detectives, were pursuing him. It made him stronger.

LENNON: We chased him all over the world. God knows where he went. So if you're reading this, Tony, let's grow up about it. It's gone. We don't want to chase you anymore, because we've done enough damage.

ONO: We also had private detectives chasing Kyoko, which I thought was a bad trip too. One guy came to report, "It was great! We almost had them. We were just behind them in a car, but they sped up and got away." I went hysterical. "What do you mean you almost got them? We are talking about my child!"

LENNON: It was like we were after an escaped convict.

PLAYBOY: Were you so persistent because you felt you were better for Kyoko?

LENNON: Yoko got steamed into a guilt thing that if she wasn't attacking them with detectives and police and the FBI, then she wasn't a good mother looking for her baby. She kept saying, "Leave them alone, leave them alone," but they said you can't do that.

ONO: For me, it was like they just disappeared from my life. Part of me left with them.

PLAYBOY: How old is she now?

ONO: Seventeen, the same as John's son.

PLAYBOY: Perhaps when she gets older, she'll seek you out.

ONO: She is totally frightened. There was a time in Spain when a lawyer and John thought that we should kidnap her.

LENNON: [*Sighing*] I was just going to commit hara-kiri first.

ONO: And we did kidnap her and went to court. The court did a very sensible thing—the judge took her into a room and asked her which one of us she wanted to go with. Of course, she said Tony. We had scared her to death. So now she must be afraid that if she comes to see me, she'll never see her father again.

> "Now I may be very positive, but I also go through deep depressions where I would like to jump out the window."

LENNON: When she gets to be in her 20s, she'll understand that we were idiots and we know we were idiots. She might give us a chance.
ONO: I probably would have lost Kyoko even if it wasn't for John. If I had separated from Tony, there would have been some difficulty.
LENNON: I'll just half-kill myself.
ONO: [*To John*] Part of the reason things got so bad was because with Kyoko, it was you and Tony dealing. Men. With your son Julian, it was women—there was more understanding between me and Cyn.
PLAYBOY: Can you explain that?
ONO: For example, there was a birthday party that Kyoko had and we were both invited, but John felt very uptight about it and he didn't go. He wouldn't deal with Tony. But we were both invited to Julian's party and we both went.
LENNON: Oh, God, it's all coming out.
ONO: Or like when I was invited to Tony's place alone, I couldn't go; but when John was invited to Cyn's, he did go.
LENNON: One rule for the men, one for the women.
ONO: So it was easier for Julian, because I was allowing it to happen.
LENNON: But I've said a million Hail Marys. What the hell else can I do?
PLAYBOY: Yoko, after this experience, how do you feel about leaving Sean's rearing to John?
ONO: I am very clear about my emotions in that area. I don't feel guilty. I am doing it in my own way. It may not be the same as other mothers, but I'm doing it the way I can do it. In general, mothers have a very strong resentment toward their children, even though there's this whole adulation about motherhood and how mothers really think about their children and how they really love them. I mean, they do, but it is not humanly possible to retain emotion that mothers are supposed to have within this society. Women are just too stretched out in different directions to retain that emotion. Too much is required of them. So I say to John—

"Part of me suspects that I'm a loser and the other part of me thinks I'm God almighty."

LENNON: I am her favorite husband—
ONO: "I am carrying the baby nine months and that is enough, so you take care of it afterward." It did sound like a crude remark, but I really believe that children belong to the society. If a mother carries the child and a father raises it, the responsibility is shared.
PLAYBOY: Did you resent having to take so much responsibility, John?
LENNON: Well, sometimes, you know, she'd come home and say, "I'm tired." I'd say, only partly tongue in cheek, "What the fuck do you think I am? I'm 24 hours with the baby! Do you think that's easy?" I'd say, "You're going to take some more interest in the child." I don't care whether it's a father or a mother. When I'm going on about pimples and bones and which TV shows to let him watch, I would say, "Listen, this is important. I don't want to hear about your R350 00 million deal tonight!" [*To Yoko*] I would like both parents to take care of the children, but how is a different matter.
ONO: Society should be more supportive and understanding.
LENNON: It's true. The saying "You've come a long way, baby" applies more to me than to her. As Harry Nilsson says, "Everything is the opposite of what it is, isn't it?" It's men who've come a long way from even contemplating the idea of equality. But although there is this thing called the women's movement, society just took a laxative and they've just farted. They haven't really had a good shit yet. The seed was planted sometime in the late '60s, right? But the real changes are coming. I am the one who has come a long way. I was the pig. And it is a relief not to be a pig. The pressures of being a pig were enormous. I don't have any hankering to be looked upon as a sex object, a male, macho rock-'n'-roll singer. I got over that a long time ago. I'm not even interested in projecting that. So I like it to be known that, yes, I looked after the baby and I made bread and I was a househusband and I am proud of it. It's the wave of the future and I'm glad to be in on the forefront of that too.
ONO: So maybe both of us learned a lot about how men and women suffer because of the social structure. And the only way to change it is to be aware of it. It sounds simple, but important things are simple.
PLAYBOY: John, does it take actually reversing roles with women to understand?
LENNON: It did for this man. But don't forget, I'm the one who benefited the most from doing it. Now I can step back and say Sean is going to be five years old and I was able to spend his first five years with him and I am very proud of that. And come to think of it, it looks like I'm going to be 40 and life begins at 40—so they promise. And I believe it, too. I feel fine and I'm very excited. It's like, you know, hitting 21, like, "Wow, what's going to happen next?" Only this time we're together.
ONO: If two are gathered together, there's nothing you can't do.
PLAYBOY: What does the title of your new album, Double Fantasy, mean?
LENNON: It's a flower, a type of freesia, but what it means to us is that if two people picture the same image at the same time, that is the secret. You can be together but projecting two different images and either whoever's the stronger at the time will get his or her fantasy fulfilled or you will get nothing but mishmash.
PLAYBOY: You saw the news item that said you were putting your sex fantasies out as an album.
LENNON: Oh, yeah. That is like when we did the bed-in in Toronto in 1969. They all came charging through the door, thinking we were going to be screwing in bed. Of course, we were just sitting there with peace signs.
PLAYBOY: What was that famous bed-in all about?
LENNON: Our life is our art. That's what the bed-ins were. When we got married, we knew our honeymoon was going to be public, anyway, so we decided to use it to make a statement. We sat in bed and talked to reporters for seven days. It was hilarious. In effect, we were doing a commercial for peace on the front page of the papers instead of a commercial for war.
PLAYBOY: You stayed in bed and talked about peace?
LENNON: Yes. We answered questions. One guy kept going over the point about Hitler: "What do you do about Fascists? How can you have peace when you've got a Hitler?" Yoko said, "I would have gone to bed with him." She said she'd have needed only 10 days with him. People loved that one.
ONO: I said it facetiously, of course. But the point is, you're not going to change the world by fighting. Maybe I was naive about the 10 days with Hitler. After all, it took 13 years with John Lennon. [*She giggles*]
PLAYBOY: What were the reports about your making love in a bag?
ONO: We never made love in a bag. People probably imagined that we were making love. It was just, all of us are in a bag, you know. The point was the outline of the bag, you know, the movement of the bag, how much we see of a person, you know. But, inside, there might be a lot going on. Or maybe nothing's going on.

PAMELA

Delfino

instagram @Pamma444

Photography by **Chris V Linton | @ChrisVLinton**
MUA **Cherry Dolls Beauty | @Cherrydollsbeauty**
Leather by **North Bound Leather | @northbound.leather**
Artwork by **David Jean**

We're happy to have you feature on Playboy! Can you give us a bit of a background on your career as a model and where it all started? My name is Pamela Defino. I am a small-town girl from Stouffville, Ontario, Canada. I always dreamt of being an actor and in my pursuit of that childhood dream modeling opportunities presented themselves. In my rookie year of modeling, which was in 2020, I was published several times and landed multiple magazine covers. It was a huge honor for me, and I am forever grateful to everyone who believed in me.

Having a full schedule must make it difficult for you to get much alone time, talk to us about the top 3 must-dos to ensure you fit in some well-deserved downtime? Fortunately, I am able to have alone time whenever I need it, my husband or our babysitter will take a shift with my 3 children if I need a break. I'm very lucky to have a solid support system.

What does it mean for you to be seen as a strong, intelligent, ambitious woman? I truly hope my children see me as such, especially my daughters. What better role model for children than their own mother to be an example of what it truly means to be a strong, intelligent, and ambitious woman. I am all of those things and more in every aspect of my life. I don't know how to be any other way. I don't chase after my dreams with training wheels on to make other people happy.

What are some of the biggest misconceptions people have about what you do? I don't know if people have any misconceptions about me because frankly, I don't care about other people's opinions. I focus on what I'm doing and tune everything else out, it's negative noise. My advice to anyone following their dream is to follow your heart if it feels right keep going! And whatever you do... Don't dim your light for anyone!

What does freedom of self-expression mean to you? It means everything. Everyone, man, woman, and child should have the right to express themselves.

We absolutely love your Instagram, your content is very dynamic, inspirational, and downright sexy, could you perhaps tell us what your personal experience as an influencer has been like? My Instagram page gained over 20k followers in just a few months and continues to grow daily. I am thankful for all the support I receive from my followers. Models and mothers have reached out to me saying how much I inspired them, many have started to peruse their own dream of modeling and acting. It's hard to find the words to describe how much that touches my heart. I enjoy expressing myself with edgy, glamourous fashion and started my Instagram page as a hobby to get through 2 years of COVID-19 lockdowns in Toronto. My husband took many of my photos, I was simply having fun and never expected all the amazing life-changing career opportunities and friendships that came as a result.

3 things that you can't go a day without. Lip gloss, the gym, my family.

What about those crazy DMs you must receive! Care to share a few funny stories regarding those? If I had a nickel every time someone asked to buy my used nylons or leather pants... LOL.

Now we're sure you experience a lot of male attention on and offline, any advice you would like to give to men out there who are hoping to catch your eye the right way? I'm married.

What is the absolute worst thing a man can do to completely put you off? I loathe men who cheat on their wives. When I was single a lot of married men hit on me. Man up and get a divorce if you're unhappy.

That said, what advice would you have to give to all women out there when it comes to love and relationships? True love is effortless. If it takes a lot of effort to make your relationship work, then it's not meant to be. Don't try to change the other person or try to control them, they are who they are. If you're unhappy move on, life is too short.

Thank you so much for sitting down with us and letting us get to know you! Any last words for our readers out there? Hello reader, if you read the interview up to this point... THANK YOU! I truly appreciate you!

The Future of Fully Legal Cannabis

Between legalization, social justice and access for veterans, cannabis reforms are pushing boundaries in 2021

BY **ALLIE VOLPE**

PHOTOS BY **MITCH M**

Last year was an eventful one for cannabis in the United States. At the onset of the pandemic in the spring, dispensaries were deemed essential businesses in more than a dozen states, causing consumers to race to stock up on supplies. In the fall, record-breaking wildfires brought on by the effects of climate change jeopardized the crops and livelihoods of growers in California, Oregon and Washington. As a result, harvests were delayed, crops were smaller than previous years and smoke in the air caused budding flowers to take on a smoky taste. Yet consumers spent consistently on cannabis throughout the year, showing that weed is not only recession- and pandemic-proof, but also, for many, truly essential.

States across the country also passed cannabis-related legislation in 2020. In February, the New Hampshire Senate passed a bill allowing medical marijuana patients to grow their own weed, and in May, Virginia decriminalized marijuana possession up to one ounce. In November, Americans weighed in on various cannabis measures in what turned out to be a historic year for cannabis legalization.

So what does this mean for cannabis consumers and cultivators in 2021? Read on to get the full breakdown of cannabis reforms happening throughout the country.

Cannabis as a National Issue

Although the 2020 elections were contentious, Americans in five states largely agreed on one thing: cannabis. In the five states where cannabis initiatives were on the November ballot Arizona, Montana, New Jersey, South Dakota and Mississippi—all proposals were approved. Voters in Arizona, Montana, New Jersey and South Dakota passed initiatives legalizing marijuana for adults over 21 years old, while Mississippi and South Dakota approved medical marijuana measures.

In a historic vote a month later, the House of Representatives passed a bill that would have decriminalized marijuana at the federal level. The Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment and Expungement Act, or MORE Act, would remove marijuana from the list of scheduled substances under the Controlled Substances Act and eliminate criminal penalties for manufacturing, distributing or possessing marijuana. The bill would also require the allocation of funds supporting businesses and communities impacted by the war on drugs and provide access to medical cannabis for veterans. Though the bill stalled in the Senate, advocates are optimistic that between the widespread approval of state-level ballot initiatives and the House's passage of the MORE Act which marked the first time Congress has ever voted on the decriminalization of cannabis the stage is set to approach legalization in a meaningful way in 2021 and beyond.

"The big takeaway from Election Day was that no one can say that this is an issue that is confined to deep blue states or coastal states," says Erik Altieri, executive director of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (known to many as NORML). "It's truly an issue that's supported across the country. These victories at the state level provide upward pressure on our federal officials."

Groundwork at the State Level

Cannabis reform has often started at the state and local level, with criminal justice and mental health care programs. Now that a third of the country's population lives in states where cannabis has been legalized, however, the pressure is on federal lawmakers to bridge the divide between local and national laws and the attitudes of constituents. (According to a recent Gallup poll, 68 percent of Americans are in favor of legalization.)

"The old saying that the states are the laboratory of democracy really rings true here," says Steve Hawkins, executive director of the Marijuana Policy Project. "This is a very classic example of the fact that change rarely comes from Washington. It normally comes to Washington, and that's where we are."

As cannabis legalization spreads, previously reluctant lawmakers will likely become more supportive of cannabis reform, Altieri argues. This year a third of the House and more than a quarter of the Senate will represent states where cannabis is legal. Politicians in neighboring states may follow their lead. For example, lawmakers in New York and Pennsylvania are feeling the pressure to legalize adult-use cannabis, lest they lose business and tax dollars to New Jersey. "I [can] see 15 legal states turning into potentially 20 legal states next year," Altieri says. On a global scale, legalization in Canada and potentially Mexico also puts the U.S. in a position to follow the momentum of countries worldwide, Hawkins says.

Racial and Social Justice Initiatives

Federal marijuana arrests continue to persist. In 2018, 40 percent of drug arrests were for the possession, sale or manufacture of marijuana (more than any other drug, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of FBI data). In 2019, that rate dropped slightly, to 35 percent. It is important to note that drastic racial disparities emerge with consistency among these arrests: A Black person is more than three times as likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than a white person, according to the ACLU's 2020 report A Tale of Two Countries: Racially Targeted Arrests in the Era of Marijuana Reform.

Central to many legalization initiatives—including the MORE Act and Arizona and New Jersey's legalization bills—is the need for social equity and restorative

> "Legalizing marijuana in and of itself doesn't end systemic racism, but it takes a huge tool out of the system's toolkit that is being used to oppress Black and brown Americans."

justice programs. In Arizona, people with minor marijuana convictions can have their records expunged, and the state will reserve 26 licenses for business owners disproportionately impacted by the war on drugs. New Jersey's bill creates a social equity excise fee whose funds will support social-good programs—like legal aid, drug rehabilitation and reentry for former prisoners—in communities impacted by disproportionate arrest rates and drug charges. As more states legalize cannabis, social justice and equity continue to emerge as essential aspects of the decriminalization process.

"Legalizing marijuana in and of itself doesn't end systemic racism, but it takes a huge tool out of the system's toolkit that is being used to oppress Black and brown Americans," Altieri says. "In the early days, state lawmakers would typically focus on things like revenue, but now, just as equally, if not more prominently, they're talking about the issues of racial justice and of mass incarceration."

Legal Cannabis for Veterans

This year could see a landmark shift for veterans' access to cannabis as well. Due to its federally illicit status, the Department of Veterans Affairs cannot prescribe medical marijuana to veteran patients, driving many to the black market. A 2017 American Legion survey found 83 percent of veteran households supported cannabis legalization, and 92 percent were in favor of additional research into the efficacy of medical marijuana. Should the MORE Act eventually become law, Veterans Affairs doctors could recommend medical marijuana to patients in states where medical use is legal.

Just as in the wider population (as seen by support for state-level cannabis initiatives and the House vote on the MORE Act), the veteran community has seen a decrease in the stigma around cannabis use, says Doug Distaso, executive director of the Veterans Cannabis Project. Distaso has heard firsthand accounts from vets about the plant's apparent therapeutic properties. Those anecdotal accounts are backed up by studies that have shown cannabis to relieve symptoms of PTSD, anxiety, insomnia and pain.

With a new secretary of veterans affairs appointed by Joe Biden, Distaso hopes for more research into cannabis's medicinal benefits, especially as it pertains to veterans.

"About nine million [veterans] get our health care from the Veterans Administration, and there's no real mechanism to discuss the health concerns of cannabis and why it's helping or how it's helping," he says. "Every state that legalizes [cannabis] helps end the stigma." Moreover, Distaso says, cannabis provides an alternative to potentially harmful prescription drugs for many veterans who are struggling with physical and mental ailments.

2021 and Beyond

Although the outlook for legal cannabis is optimistic, challenges remain. Politicians resistant to reform hold the keys to federal legalization, Altieri says. Proponents must build on the momentum of recent victories and continue to rally support and invigorate organizers, donors and, eventually, lawmakers.

"Just because things are going in a positive direction doesn't mean that things can't stall," Hawkins says. "This is not the time for anybody to take their foot off the gas. This will require a dedicated group of people who are going to put their time and energy and effort into it."

The Dope Tutor Answers

WHAT IS CALI SOBER?

When Alcoholics Anonymous co-founder Bill Wilson dropped acid in 1956, it transformed his thinking about sobriety. He experienced a spiritual awakening that led him to embrace LSD as a potential treatment for chronic alcoholism, believing acid could put people in touch with the higher power needed to overcome addiction. (Clinical studies have since indicated that Wilson's instinct was spot-on: LSD use may indeed help reduce alcohol abuse.) Wilson couldn't have known it at the time, but he was making early contributions to what we know today as the "Cali sober" lifestyle.

When journalist and rave culturalist Michelle Lhooq popularized the term Cali sober in 2019, she may not have known about Wilson's acid trip, but she did know she wanted to quit drinking and using hard drugs. Both cannabis and psychedelics, she felt, could be allies on that journey—useful substitutes for more harmful compounds.

Cali sober generally means avoiding booze and hard drugs but not weed or psychedelics such as acid, MDMA and psilocybin. But Cali sober is a flexible lifestyle that allows people a nuanced approach to sobriety and intoxication. Some who call themselves Cali sober still drink lightly on occasion, often just one glass of wine or a single cocktail. And as you might expect for a term short for "California," it comes with healthful associations: Yoga, meditation and other wellness practices are common add-ons to the Cali sober life. Above all, going Cali sober means taking control of your own health and wellness and rejecting rigid, binary definitions of sobriety.

"What matters with Cali sober is that it becomes additive to life and happiness," culture journalist Jackie Bryant tells me, "not a numbing or addictive way out of life." Writer Molly Lambert has remarked that going Cali sober means you are "weed edge"—an update of being "straight edge," a descriptor popularized by sober punk rockers who rejected intoxicants and believed sobriety gave them an advantage

In recent years Cali sober events, though mostly on a pandemic pause now, have been growing more common, including Weed Raves in L.A. and New York City hosted by Lhooq and high-end cannabis-infused dinner parties from Malibu to Seattle. Numerous Northern California weed farms now host wellness retreats, and this Dope Tutor has attended more than one Cali sober event that was just as fun and social as any booze-infused event.

Though Cali sober might be a prime example of an enlightened 21st century self-care strategy, the practice of choosing cannabis over other recreational drugs emerged long ago. In the Jazz Age of the 1920s and 1930s, some musicians drank booze or took heroin before playing—others just smoked weed. (By my estimation, the weed smokers generally had longer musical careers.) When beatniks and poets began embracing jazz and cannabis in the 1940s and 1950s, some replaced alcohol in favor of cannabis.

As the Age of Aquarius dawned in the 1960s, LSD proliferated beyond government labs and onto the streets. New lifestyle practices revolving around cannabis and psychedelics began to emerge as a backlash to society's alcoholic predilections. Subculture gatherings like the Rainbow Family of Living Light in the 1970s and early reggae festivals strongly discouraged alcohol, but weed was shared freely and widely. Many hippie communes and organic farms did not allow booze, though ganja and other "visionary" plants were an integral part of operations. This was not a world of microdosing before a cocktail party—this was a world of creating alternative realities separate from the dominant culture. These early pioneers laid the groundwork for the Cali sober lifestyle.

Yet the burgeoning societal shift away from alcohol and toward cannabis and psychedelics ran into a brick wall in the 1980s: Ronald Reagan and the war on drugs. The implementation of widespread workplace drug testing had a huge effect on the ability of working people to consume cannabis: Weed can be detected up to 60 days after consumption, whereas cocaine typically leaves the body after only a few days. Prohibition does not stop people from using drugs, but it can make drug use more dangerous, as users seek other, sometimes riskier, paths to intoxication. And unlike cannabis at the time, alcohol was cheap and easily accessible by anyone of legal age.

THE BEAUTY OF "CALI SOBER" IS THAT IT ALLOWS SPACE FOR EXPERIMENTATION, FOR A PERSON TO DEFINE THE TERM BASED ON THEIR OWN NEEDS AND TO RECALIBRATE AS NECESSARY.

In 1996 California was the first state to legalize medical cannabis, launching a post-Reagan renaissance in mainstream pop culture of what we now know as the Cali sober lifestyle. It took more than two decades for legalization to spread, but today about 100 million Americans live in legal-weed states, allowing them to experiment with cannabis consumption and the Cali sober lifestyle.

That's the beauty of Cali sober: It allows space for experimentation, for a person to define the term based on their own needs and to recalibrate as necessary—including seeking help if needed. I believe our world can be healed with the help of visionary plants like cannabis, and encouraging the Cali sober lifestyle is one way to get more people to the party.

The Dope Tutor Answers:

IS IT OKAY TO GIVE POT AS A PRESENT?

If living a pleasurable life is more art than science, then so is living a successful weed life. I got into cannabis because of the way it made me feel. I fell in love with ganja because it let me see newly vivid colors and enjoy delicious food like never before. I heard music in an entirely new way after smoking a joint. My dating life drastically improved thanks to sharing cannabis. My weed origin story is about experiencing the joy of cannabis and how that allowed me to begin walking down a more pleasurable path in life.

Your Dope Tutor learned in those early years that cannabis-based pleasure transcends the baseline human experience. It elevates it. Some even say you can "kiss the sky" when you feel high enough. Plenty of science is at work as cannabis pulses through the body—receptors are activated in the brain and different chemical reactions ensue, including euphoria or a sense of calmness. The list of pleasurable sensations is long; many are not fully understood by science. That's where the art comes in.

Pairing weed with other experiences can provide a true lift in the good-living department, and sharing that pairing with people you care about takes it to another level. Whether it be passing the vape pen before retreating to bed with a lover or smoking a joint out in nature with a buddy, combining weed with your favorite people and pursuits can help you master the craft of enhancing enjoyment. To me, being high is about not only getting stoned, but also attaining a state of mind that facilitates gratitude and appreciation for life and all the people we share it with.

Part of the mindful art of living your best weed life, as I see it, is adhering to certain unshakable principles. First, always consume the highest-quality cannabis you can. Buy the best; worry about money later. (Friends may be more likely to lend you some scratch after getting stoned tasting your chronic than smoking your schwag.)

Second, share your stash with those you love as often as you can. (Reserve some for yourself, naturally.) The curse of Mama Ganja is that we all run out of weed at some point. But if you've been generous with your goods, the moment your stash is dry, the sharing principle is activated, and your friends will come to the rescue. (Upon getting stoned, you'll remark on how karma is a very real thing that scientists should study, and everyone will nod in agreement.)

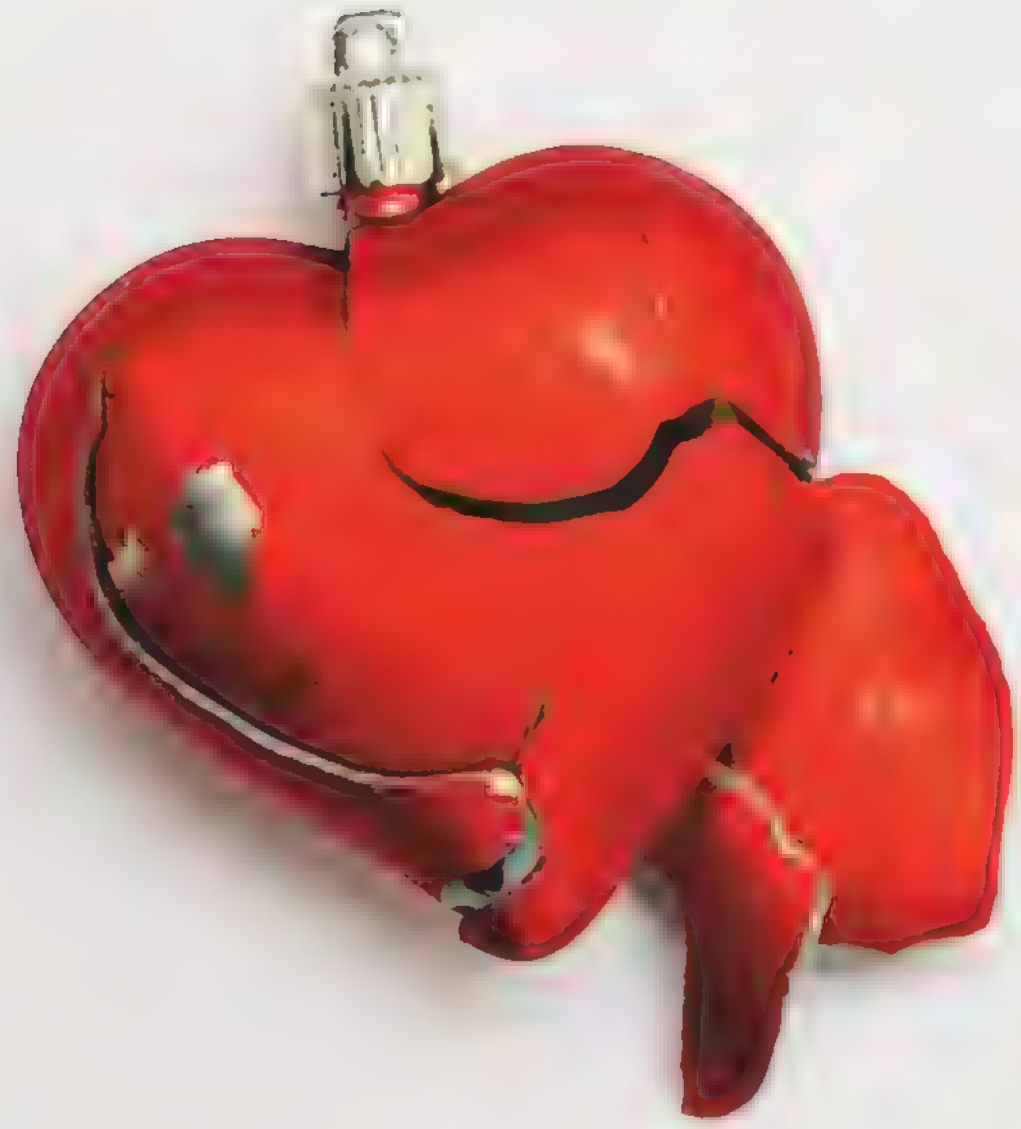
The last principle of a well-lived weed life: Never let people you care about suffer through marijuana deficiency syndrome, or MDS. It's a term my brother and I use to describe an unfortunate state of mind that usually involves tension and irritability and always involves the need to consume some weed. This last principle is really just a reiteration of the second, which is a variation on the first. Mama Ganja is full of complexities and resists conformity—just like this Dope Tutor.

Cannabis will bring pleasure to those who seek it. In part because of this, it makes for an unforgettable gift. It never disappoints, assuming you have adhered to the above principles.

People authentically appreciate the gift of weed. I find that each time I smoke some gifted ganja, I reflect upon the person who gave it to me and smile. Accessories like bongs, pipes and hemp blunt wraps are always appreciated. There are all kinds of CBD products, including some interesting adult-pleasure items. Books about weed are plentiful, including cookbooks. And hemp-based clothing, shoes, edibles and other products now boast higher quality and lower prices. The wild world of weed continues to evolve, and gifts are no exception.

So this holiday season, make a good decision and roll up a present of pleasure, along with the art of a (weed) life well lived.

THE LAST PRINCIPLE OF A WELL-LIVED WEED LIFE: NEVER LET PEOPLE YOU CARE ABOUT SUFFER THROUGH MARIJUANA DEFICIENCY SYNDROME.



No Your Ex Doesn't Need Your *"Gift"* of Friendship This Holiday

BY **DANA HAMILTON**

PHOTO **SHUTTERSTOCK**

In the immediate aftermath of a messy breakup, I can't tell you how many times I've seen people bewildered when their offer to stay friends with their ex gets turned down. Though often seen as a "good guy" move, wanting to stay friends after a breakup is anything but. It's selfish, it's emotionally manipulative and it's the easiest way to defer blame. If the other person refuses, they're seen as petty or rude. "Well, I tried," the person who offered friendship thinks to themselves. "They're just being all the things I broke up with them for." It's the easiest way to paint someone as childish.

Our dating columnist offers an impassioned defense of the clean break

Do you know what the nicest thing to do after a breakup is? The kindest, most compassionate, truly "good guy" move? Giving them space. That means no texts, liking social media posts or watching their Instagram stories (ya creep). Leave them be. Please. I'm begging you.

Sometimes a "meh" relationship fizzles and there's no harm, no foul. If a relationship has slowly been drifting toward friendship for a while and you mutually decide you'd be better off as friends—and no one feels coerced—go for it. Staying friends doesn't hurt anyone. But more often than not, this isn't the case. Breakups suck. The oldest advice in the book for healing a heartbreak is time and space. The best way to deal with all the emotions that have been stirred up, all the pain, is to not constantly be surrounded by reminders of it, even if it's no one's fault.

If you broke up with someone and you're still in contact with them—no matter how clear you are about your intentions—you're fostering hope in them. Hope that it'll work out, that you'll change your mind. You're putting more logs on the fire. It's cruel. If you don't want to be with the person, don't be in contact with them, at least for a while. If you leave any room for hope, the human brain will nourish the hell out of it. That hope will only grow bigger, making the hurt when it ultimately doesn't work out even worse than if you hadn't kept an open line of communication in the first place.

This also includes if one person was mostly at fault for a relationship ending. You may think apologizing profusely and sending messages of remorse constantly will be helpful, but trust me: Less is more. Do you know how hard it is to heal from a traumatic event when there are reminders of the thing that caused you pain all around you? It's nearly impossible.

So if someone blocks you, it's not a dig or an attempt to hurt you or even a "fuck you." It's self-preservation. It's upholding healthy boundaries. Blocking an ex can be self-care. If you truly want the best for your ex, respect their decision to put some distance between you while they go off and rebuild themselves.

Ask yourself: Why do you even want to be friends in the first place? Take a moment to list your friends. How many can you name before your exes? If you don't have many friends who you haven't previously dated, isn't that concerning? Unfortunately, a lot of people attempt to befriend their exes because they realize post-breakup that they don't have many friends of their own. If you don't have any friends other than your ex-partner, that's a big red flag. It's a problem that needs to be fixed. If your list of friends you haven't been romantically involved with is short, then maybe work on bolstering that list. C'mon, man. There are 7.6 billion people in the world.

If your list of non-ex friends is long, good! Go reconnect with them. Give those people your energy and attention.

We have this idea that our partner should be our best friend, and sometimes they take on the role of a therapist, a teacher or, worse, a parent. That's why things often implode and people find themselves looking for the emotional outlet they've gone to for years: their partner. Please instead go out and get yourself an actual therapist, because an ex should stay an ex instead of being turned into an emotional dumping ground.

Can you become friends again after a few years when the dust and emotions have settled? Maybe, if both parties are comfortable with it. But when it comes to past lovers, it's perfectly fine to live by mafia rules. What do Time Warner customer service, Chick-fil-A and all my exes have in common? They're all dead to me. Because I want them to go on and live their lives.

So let your ex go off and find their person in peace. If you truly love and care about them and want the best for them, don't give them the "gift" of friendship. Give them the gift of silence.

So if someone blocks you, it's not a dig or an attempt to hurt you or even a "fuck you." It's self-preservation.

COURTNEY *Marie*

Instagram **@lovefromcourtney**

Photography by **Mike Cohen | @mikecohenphotos**
Production by **@social_ikon**
MUA **Stephanie Emma | @stephanieemma.makeupartist**
PR **LSA Publications | @leo.alderman @lsapublications**
Agency **@lsamodels**

Happy to have you feature on Playboy! Can you give us a bit of a background on your career as a model and where it all started? I started my modelling career in 2017, I landed a job with Ann summers and at the age of 18 I think that was an incredible achievement, ever since then I've had photo shoot opportunities every week!

How did you come to shooting with the new platform Social Ikon? I came across their page on Instagram and decided to apply for the modelling competition, not once did I think I'd actually win!

What are some of your best career highlights so far? Winning the competition and shooting for playboy is definitely the top of my highlights, I've always wanted to be in playboy for as long as I can remember!

What was your favourite part of the Social Ikon modelling competition shoot? Knowing that I'd been Picked out of so many other girls who'd applied, big confidence boot! And Shooting with mike Cohen, definitely my favourite, he's such a talented photographer!

Can you give us breakdown of a typical day in the life of a glamourous model on set? A typical shoot day, depending on location I'd aim to arrive 8/9am and jump straight into hair and makeup, start shooting around 10am and shoot for 3/4 hours, with some outfit changes and coffee breaks! After the shoot I'll go home and relax.

What are some of the biggest misconceptions people have about what you do? That modelling is easy! And you just "pose" when it really isn't just that, you have to look your best and feel your best at all times on a shoot, it can get very tiring! But the end results are always worth it!

Now we know there are some pretty perks that come with being a beautiful woman, what would say are your favourite ones? To this I would say getting a lot of compliments from people you look up to on social media, when somebody you've idolised compliments on you, it is really a big confidence booster!

Given that you're a stunning woman who undoubtedly gets a lot of attention, what are some of the nicest things men have done to try and get your attention? I have had men randomly ask to send me money for being so beautiful, although I thought it was crazy it's very flattering!!

What makes you feel absolutely sexy? Beautiful lingerie and amazing hair!!

3 things that you can't go a day without? My phone, coffee and my chihuahua!
Anything exciting we should be on the lookout for coming through this year from you? Definitely! Updates on my Instagram shortly! Keep your eyes peeled!

Can our readers catch up with you and stay updated with your work on Social Ikon? Yes you can, as soon the launch I'll be all over it!

Thank you so much for sitting down with us and letting us get to know you! Any last words for our readers out there? Being in playboy has always been a huge goal of mine! Not that I ever thought I'd be featured at all so now that I have been in over the moon!!

Taylor Brumann

Shoot Location: Meco - Portugal

Photography by
Gonc
Photography As
Filipe Fic

PLAYBOY

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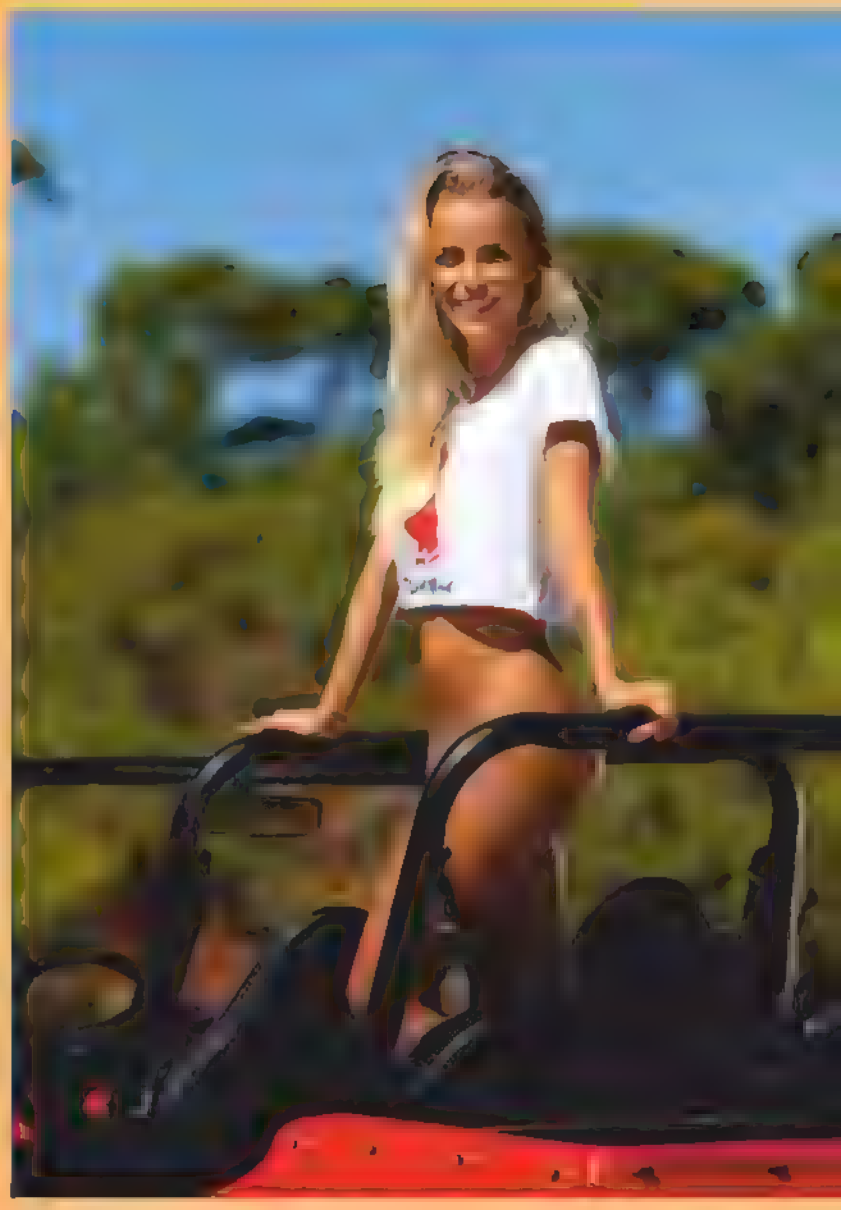

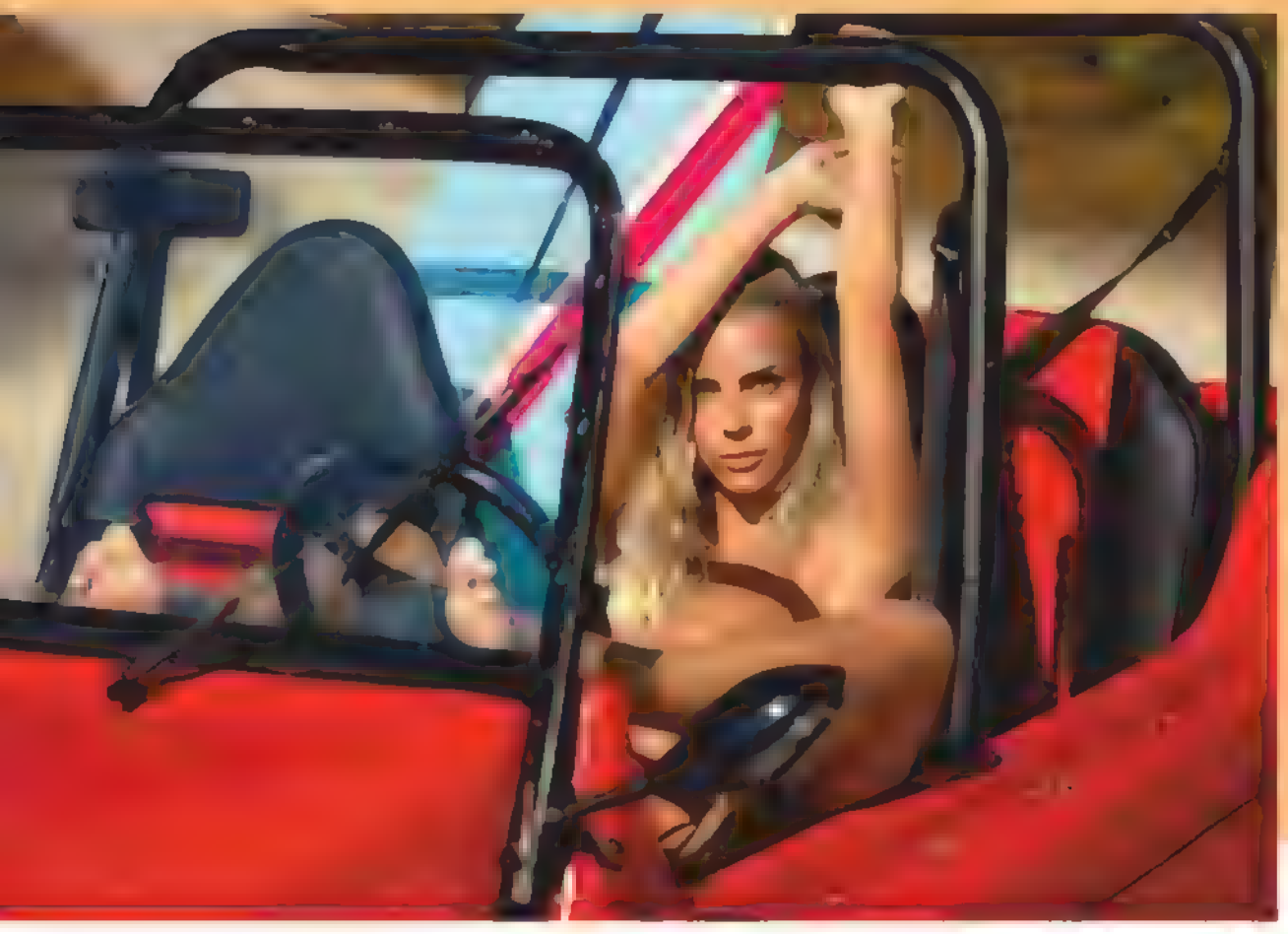

Birth: 19.12.1996
Instagram account: @taylor.brumann
Measures: 86/62/92
Height: 170cm
Weight: 51kg
Country where you live: Switzerland
Country you were born in: Switzerland
Occupation: Model
Favorite movie: Shutter island
Favorite music: techno/house/anything to sing along to
Favorite book: I don't have one but anything with psychology fascinates me

Describe yourself. Tell us a little about yourself and your personality.
I have different personalities haha. I would say I'm a really open minded and cheerful person most of the time. I tend to be a bit hyperactive so I talk a lot and I can't sit still for too long... I'm very communicative with everyone. On the other hand, I am really sarcastic and most people can't always keep up with that. I'm also a very strong person emotionally and very deep. I have a lot of empathy and understanding for almost everything. Self reflects a lot.

How was the shooting for Playboy with Ana Dias?
It was truly amazing! Ana and her team were so kind and funny! They made me feel very comfortable and we laughed a lot. Really good energy on the set. I loved it!

What are your career ambitions?
I want to keep modeling and growing. Also I want to start with acting which I am doing now... slowly getting there ;)

Describe hobbies/interests/special skills.
I love traveling, walking a lot, hanging out with my friends, being in nature, listening to good music and drinking good wine. Special skills..... I do ski and would say I'm good at it but besides that..... I'm good at packing my suitcase? Does that count haha?

What makes you happy?
A lot of things can make me happy. sunshine, good people, good energy, nature, good food, good photoshoots ;)

Who is your celebrity crush? And why?
I was never the type of girl who had a celebrity crush butttt I would say Brad Pitt in a bit younger than now haha. He is very handsome and I like his manly and calm energy.

What do you love most about your body?
hmmmm... my collarbones and arms hahahah or my face I guess...

How do you feel about posing nude?
It always depends. I have no problem with it unless I feel comfortable with my surroundings and the people I work with.

What is at the top of your bucket list?
Keep traveling to new places!

What is the craziest thing you did?
Skydiving a few weeks ago!

What's your guiltiest pleasure?
Chocolate, wine and pasta...

When do you feel sexiest?
When I put on nice lingerie or when I'm super happy and comfortable with life

You're particularly turned on by:
Good vibes, authentic people, funny people, depth between people

You're turned off by:
Drama, rude people, unthankful people

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